

# **IOWA BIRD LIFE**

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**IOWA ORNITHOLOGISTS' UNION**



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## IOWA BIRD LIFE

*The Iowa Ornithologists' Union, founded in 1923, encourages interest in the identification, study, and protection of birds in Iowa and seeks to unite those who have these interests in common. Iowa Bird Life and IOU News are quarterly publications of the Union.*

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# Meet an Iowa Birder: Tucker J. Lutter

*Douglas Chapman*

Tucker J. Lutter, Bronson, IA, is an extraordinary birder who will be 16 on 16 September 2009. Astonishing as it may seem, he already has experienced and accomplished more than many birders three and four times his age. Those of us who have read stories from Tucker's newsletter or blog or have birded with him appreciate his accuracy and enthusiasm for correct identification.

Tucker has always loved the outdoors. "I don't like being indoors. I always do better thinking outdoors. I have all my life," he says nonchalantly while scanning the trees in the Lutter family yard in Bronson. He pointed to the conifer that he spotted the Red Crossbills in—and can remember the details as if it were yesterday. His other favorite yard bird is a Barn Owl. How many of us have Barn Owl as a yard bird?

Tucker started birding at age seven when a man very special to the Lutter family gave him an old leather-bound bird book. The man was dying of leukemia and Tucker will always be grateful for this gift. His second bird book was a copy of the gigantic Smithsonian guide, which he laughingly admits was nearly as big as he was and got several smiles from local birders when he would show up to bird with them.

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He counts as his first bird a Pine Siskin, found in the conifers in his yard on the eastern side of Bronson. I can attest that this is a very birdy place, which, at age 10, Tucker named the Woodpecker Acre Wildlife Refuge complete with a sign on the garage (Figure 1)! I went to Bronson to meet with Tucker and his mother, and we went birding around the areas he knows best. At the Sioux Jersey Cattle Farm ponds in Woodbury Co., where he found and documented a Barrow's Goldeneye (Lutter 2009), we found an adult Rough-legged Hawk (Figure 2). It was so very cooperative, it almost made one think that Tucker had control of how well it showed, coming within a few feet of the car. That was the first of many good sightings we had that day.



Figure 1. Tucker J. Lutter. Photograph by Douglas Chapman, Sioux Falls, SD.

Such is Tucker's desire for birding knowledge, that a constant discussion about birds with Tucker is the norm. His knowledge is matched by his desire to learn more. Never hogging a conversation, he asks as many questions as he answers. And he listens intently to any answers; it keeps a person on his toes. It was a real privilege to bird with him. I need to add that his mother, Angie, was the one who first spotted the Rough-legged Hawk—she claims not to be a birder, but she does, after all, live with Tucker. Les and Angie Lutter have embraced Tucker's desire for birds and the outdoors. They are the ideal parents for a young man who has

such a talent for observation and takes such joy in wild things. (The name is pronounced "loo'-ter," and Angie tells a story that when Tucker was very young he asked her why the newsman kept talking about their family: they were reporting on "looters" in stories of city riots.) His father has met many Iowa birders as well. He was with Tucker at the IOU meeting in Ankeny.

Tucker's interests also include butterflies, flora, and scouting as a recently pinned Eagle Scout. Seeing Regal Fritillaries at Broken Kettle Grasslands, a Nature Conservancy property in northwest Iowa, gave Tucker a thrill. He also added several other butterfly species and many plants to his newest and ever-growing lists as well. A recent Nature Conservancy trip allowed him to see prairie rattlesnakes and gain some knowledge of them at the only known remaining Iowa breeding area, a small area of the Broken Kettle Grasslands.

A few of Tucker's other accomplishments in the world of birds and the outdoors include publishing a color newsletter entitled "Birding with Tucker" and a birding blog <<http://birdingwithtucker.blogspot.com>>; teaching an introductory birdwatching course at the Loess Hills Prairie Seminar in Onawa on 29–31 May 2009, which is sponsored by the Northwest Area Education Agency in Sioux City; and participating regularly in several Audubon Christmas Bird Counts, including Sioux City, Cherokee, Ida Grove, and Westfield. He monitors two Breeding Bird Survey routes in Iowa: Washta and Pierson. For the last two summers, he has participated in the second Iowa Breeding Bird Atlas project. He



Figure 2. Rough-legged Hawk, Woodbury, 22 February 2009.  
Photograph by Douglas Chapman, Sioux Falls, SD.

has reported from all twelve of the Woodbury County blocks, three in Monona, two in Plymouth, and several individual blocks in other counties.

Tucker belongs to The Iowa Ornithologists' Union, the American Birding Association, Loess Hills Audubon, and the Minnesota Ornithologists' Union. He is also a member of The Nature Conservancy and the South Dakota Ornithologists' Union, for which he recently agreed to become Youth Editor for their journal, *South Dakota Bird Notes*.

His present ABA life list totals 309, with 271 seen in Iowa. By publication time, he will have been to New Mexico with the Boy Scouts and will no doubt have several more. He is very happy that Number 300 was a Boreal Owl.

Tucker looks forward to attending VENT's youth birder outing, Camp Chiricahua, in Arizona next year. Tucker also wants to bird Alaska and Australia. But "any tropical birding location" is a priority. His favorite places to bird, however, will likely remain those close to home: the Owego Wetlands area, the Luton Wildlife Management Area, Broken Kettle Grasslands, and Stone State Park to name a few.

Looking toward the future, his professional goal is to work in conservation and/or wildlife management and arrange and lead birding tours on the side, especially intergenerational ones.

One bird with no Iowa record that Tucker thinks will appear sooner or later is Glaucous-winged Gull. South Dakota had their first record for the state last winter. He thinks Iowa should not be far behind. Besides the Barrow's Goldeneye, the other bird he is most proud of finding was a Pileated Woodpecker in Woodbury County.

While many of us may have had an early interest in birds and their lives, Tucker has taken that interest and embraced it fully. His great spirituality has translated to love of all things wild and living. He speaks glowingly of butterflies and flowers and lizards and dragonflies seen; he mentions mammals as well as other wildlife and prairie plants: in Tucker's words, "Just everything!" But tops will likely remain the birds of the air above him and their nests and their stories.

#### LITERATURE CITED

Lutter, T. 2009. Barrow's Goldeneye in Woodbury County. *Iowa Bird Life* 79(1):55–56.

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# Field Reports—Spring 2009

*Matthew C. Kenne*

## WEATHER

March temperatures yo-yoed wildly: from single digits and below to start the month, to 79 degrees in the SW on the 5th, below zero at Sibley on the 11th, to 81 degrees at Leon on the 17th, and finally to the month's heaviest snowfall on the 28th in southeast Iowa. The rains varied as well, from below normal to the northwest to well above normal to the southeast. April was split in half, with early April very cool and accompanied by a late-season snowstorm the 4th and 5th that dropped a belt of 8–10 inches across the central part of the state. It became markedly warmer as the month progressed, with 90s the 23rd and 24th leading to heavy rains the 25th and 26th. Again, northwest Iowa stayed much drier in April, whereas central Iowa



*Matthew C. Kenne*

and the southeast were quite wet. Cresco and Decorah recorded 29 degrees on 17 May, and Sioux City reached 97 degrees only two days later, but lesser swings throughout the month produced very little stormy weather in May. Precipitation was spread across May, with the heaviest rains coming the 26th, but totals again remained light in the northwest. Hawarden totaled three-fourths inch of rain during May compared to Charles City's 8  $\frac{3}{4}$  inches.

## GENERAL TRENDS

Water conditions affect the presence of so many species. Black-bellied Whistling-Duck has appeared in the state now for the third year in a row (Kenne 2007, Dinsmore 2008), and while not directly tied to water levels in our state, it is a trend that is likely to continue as this species' population swells out of traditional areas in the south. Waterfowl reports in general seemed similar to recent years, with flocks entering the state in February and quickly spreading to northern areas during warm spells. Few large white-headed gulls were found, as rains and warmer temperatures ended optimum ice conditions. Water levels drastically affect shorebird observations as well, so it was enjoyable to follow the progression of a controlled draw-down of water by the Iowa DNR at Dan Green Slough Clay. This was a consistently good shorebird spot after conditions changed at other locations, holding numbers and variety into June. Good numbers of long-legged wading birds found at Forney Lake Fremont were likely searching for habitat conditions similar to those that led

to successful nesting by several species at that location last summer (Dinsmore 2008). Time and weather will tell if there will be any repeat performances in 2009.

There were a number of comments suggesting that passerine migration was lackluster in May. The relatively calm and cool weather for much of May didn't seem to trigger many of the "dripping from the branches" warbler mornings that birders enjoy so much. A phenomenon that was far from lackluster this spring was the amazing number of accidental vagrants from the western United States that were found in the state. It's possible that these events weren't connected, that there was no "trend" involved, but as Auric Goldfinger said to James Bond: "Once is happenstance, twice is coincidence, three times is enemy action." The series of events:

9 May	Western Tanager
11 May	Townsend's Solitaire (not accidental, could have wintered in the area, but follows the same migration path)
13 May	Black-headed Grosbeak
14 May	Violet-green Swallow and Black-headed Grosbeak
15 May	Western Tanager
17 May	Two Black-headed Grosbeaks
19 May	Black-headed Grosbeak

In looking for possible causes for a shift in migration, first thoughts go to weather. But the weather to our west during this period lacked the deep, strong low-pressure areas with winds and storms necessary to grab migrants and steer them off course into Iowa. Would a 25% increase in average wind speed out of the west for eight straight days in early May, as was the case this spring at El Paso, Texas, be sufficient to cause migrants to shift to the east, leading them to enter Iowa from the south? Unfortunately, finding real answers would take a much more sophisticated analysis than I can provide. Regardless, whether La Nina was a factor by moving the strong westerly jet stream and resulting weather patterns, or something completely different affected the birds, Iowans were thrilled to have these rare visitors popping up in their own back yards.

Lazuli Bunting, another accidental western vagrant, was found again this year, adding to a recently increasing series of Iowa records of this species. For whatever reason, Lazuli Bunting is being found more often in eastern Nebraska as well (Ross Silcock, pers. comm.).

Another surprising aspect to birding this spring was the explosion of nesting Pine Siskins across Iowa (and neighboring states, judging from listerv posts). One never knows what to expect from Pine Siskins in a given spring: sometimes only a few individuals are found, sometimes flocks of dozens remain at feeders long after a winter invasion is over, and rarely a pair is found nesting somewhere in the state in a landscape conifer or cemetery. After a major winter invasion this year, a pair of siskins were found 18 March nest-building at Riverview Cemetery, Algona *Kossuth* and the young birds survived winter-like weather to fledge by 21 April. Nesting evidence was eventually noted from ten counties, and May observations from eight additional counties suggest the possibility of widespread undetected nesting elsewhere. Previously, only at Ames in 1990 were more than a single siskin nest found at a location, when Jim and Steve Dinsmore discovered three on the Iowa



*Black-bellied Whistling-Duck, Hobbs Pits, Carroll, 1 May 2009. Photograph by Stephen J. Dinsmore, Ames, IA.*

Western Tanagers, five Black-headed Grosbeaks, and a Lazuli Bunting. Other notable finds included Red-throated Loon, Yellow Rails, Black-necked Stilts, Laughing Gull, White-winged Doves, Barn Owls, Black-billed Magpie, Townsend's Solitaire, Audubon's Yellow-rumped Warbler, possibly nesting Pine Warbler, Smith's Longspurs, White-winged Crossbills, and nesting Pine Siskins.

#### SPECIES DATA

All CAPS = Casual or Accidental species. \* = documented. County names are in italics. Full names of contributors are at the end of the article. Abbreviations used: **A** = area, **Cr** = Creek, **Isl** = island, **L** = lake, **L&D** = lock and dam, **M** = marsh, **m.ob.** = many observers, **NA** = nature area, **NWR** = national wildlife refuge, **P** = park, **Pr** = prairie, **R** = river, **RA** = recreation area, **Res** = reservoir, **SF** = state forest, **Sl** = slough, **SP** = state park, **USNWR** = Union Slough National Wildlife Refuge, **WCCB** = Winnebago County Conservation Board, **WPA** = waterfowl production area, **WA** = wildlife area.

**BLACK-BELLIED WHISTLING-DUCK:** One was at Diamond L *Poweshiek* 30 Apr (\*MP, RIA-ph, \*PHA), and another was documented 1 May at Hobbs Pits *Carroll* at the Spring IOU Meeting (\*SJD, \*JB, \*TLu).

**Greater White-fronted Goose:** Mi-

State University campus *Story* (Dinsmore 1990). Loosely colonial nesting occurred this spring as well, with a total of seven nests found from eight active pairs at Riverview Cemetery and three at Algona High School (MCK), and three nests were again at ISU (SJD). The last nest-building noted was at Fairfield *Jefferson* 19 May (SJD).

#### UNUSUAL SPECIES

Casual and Accidental species found this spring were Violet-green Swallow—a new addition to the Iowa list, Iowa's second Fork-tailed Flycatcher, two Black-bellied Whistling-Ducks, Ferruginous Hawk, King Rail, two Snowy Plovers, a flock of Whimbrels, Ruff, Bewick's Wren, Mountain Bluebird, Sprague's Pipit, two

gration swept quickly into northern Iowa, where 3,100 were found 11 Mar at Clear L *Cerro Gordo* (PH) and 1,000 were at Big M *Butler* 13 Mar (CRE). The most, also 13 Mar, were 10,000 passing through *Monona* (GLV). Numbers quickly dropped off through April, and the last was at Diehl Wetlands *Warren* 23 May (JG) and 2 at Riverton *WA Fremont* 28 May (KDy).

**Snow Goose:** March numbers ranged from 60,000 on 5 Mar at Rapp P *Page* (KDy) and 100,000 on 13 Mar *Monona* (GLV) in the west, to 100 on 9 Mar at L Meyer *Winneshiek* (Larry Reis fide DC) and 300 on 15 Mar at Cone M *Louisa* (CRE) in the east. Last: 31 still in *Woodbury* 21 May (TLu), 3 on 22 May *Boone* (SJD), and 7 lingered at Riverton *WA Fremont* 28 May (KDy).

**Ross's Goose:** The largest flock reported was 3,500 on 5 Mar at Rapp P *Page* (KDy), and more than 250 were at South Twin L *Calhoun* 3 and 11 Apr (SSP), but



most groups numbered 12 or less. Last: singles 15 May at Mason City *Cerro Gordo* (RGo) and 17 May at Glendale Cemetery *Polk* (JG, SJD).

**Cackling Goose:** The high count was 1,600 on 11 Mar at Clear L *Cerro Gordo* (PH). The last single was 8 Apr at Littlefield P *Audubon* (JG).

**Canada Goose:** A flock of forty-four presumed molt migrants passed north over *Algona Kossuth* 31 May (MCK).

**Mute Swan:** One was apparently looking for company 7 Mar at a swan release pen site *Buena Vista* (LAS), and another was at *Riverton WA Fremont* 1 and 2 Apr (KDy).

**Trumpeter Swan:** Of ten reports of 1–31 swans from ten counties, only two mentioned collared birds.



*Trumpeter Swans, Mallard Marsh, Cerro Gordo, 10 April 2009. Photograph by John Bissell, Grimes, IA.*



*Hybrid Canada Goose at Riverside Park in Ottumwa, Wapello, 21 March 2009. Photograph by Jay Gilliam, Norwalk, IA.*

**Tundra Swan:** All: one 15 Mar at Blue L *Monona* remained from Feb (GLV), 12 on 15 Mar *Iowa* (JG, SJD), 27 Mar at Armour Dial Pond *Lee* (JLF), 12 on 3 Apr at Mud L *Dubuque* (CRE), and 2 on 4 Apr *Chickasaw* (MP).

**Gadwall:** Flocks of 100–600 were reported 13 Mar–11 Apr (peak 29 Mar at Sedan Bottoms *Appanoose* RLC), after which, except for 47 on 15 May at Forney L *Fremont* (KDy), only singles or pairs were reported.

**American Wigeon:** The first to reach north Iowa were 5 on 11 Mar at Clear L *Cerro Gordo* (PH). Most: 103 on 14 Mar at Twelve Mile L *Union* (JG) and 116 on 21 Mar *Ma-haska* (SJD). On 11 Apr, 57 were at South Twin L *Calhoun* and 25 at Lizard L *Pocahontas*

(SSP), then none were reported until the last 2 lingering at Riverton WA *Fremont* 14 May (KDy).

**American Black Duck:** From 1 to 4 were seen in six counties 2–15 Mar, with the last 2 on 10 Apr at Buffalo Creek WA *Delaware* (CRE).

**Blue-winged Teal:** First: 2 on 1 Mar at Green Valley L *Union* (JG) [ties third earliest] and 7 Mar at Montrose M *Lee* (JWR). Most: 556 on 26 Apr at Saylorville Res *Polk* (SJD).

**Cinnamon Teal:** All: One was in a flooded field along Hwy 30 between Boone and Ames 1 Apr (Jim Moreland), and another 6 Apr *Decatur* was considered a hybrid with Blue-winged Teal (BBa).

**Northern Shoveler:** Most: 1,005 on 3 Apr at Lizard L *Pocahontas* (SSP). Counts of 130–450 spanned the period of 21 Mar–22 Apr. Late May reports were from *Worth*, *Winnebago*, and *Kossuth* (SSP, MCK) in the expected nesting region.

**Northern Pintail:** The last large flock

was 435 on 14 Mar at Twelve Mile L *Union* (JG). The final birds reported were 2 on 3 Apr at Lizard L *Pocahontas* (SSP) and a single at Hanlontown *Worth* 11 Apr (JB).

**Green-winged Teal:** The season started off with two each in *Polk*, *Union*, and *Clarke* 1 Mar (JB, JG). Most: 240 on 21 Mar at Rathbun WA *Lucas* (JG), 100 on 25 Mar at Princeton WA *Scott* (WMZ), and 350 on 30 Mar *Hancock* (PH). Last: 24 May at Table Marsh WMA *Woodbury* (TLu).

**Canvasback:** Peak Mar numbers were found along the Mississippi R: 920 on 17 Mar *Jackson* (SJD) and 500 on 21 Mar *Clayton* (CRE). The last large flock was 600 at USNWR *Kossuth* 7 Apr (MCK). May reports were all singles: 1 May at Princeton WA *Scott* (WMZ), 17 May at Ventura *Cerro Gordo* (PH), and 27 May at Buffalo Creek WA *Delaware* (BSc, CRE).

**Redhead:** Most: 117 on 17 Mar at Pool 12 *Jackson* (SJD) and 447 on 20 Mar at Clear L *Cerro Gordo* (PH). Last: 3 on 10 May at Eagle L *Kossuth* (SSP) and up to 7 through the end of May at USNWR *Kossuth* (MCK).

**Ring-necked Duck:** 520 were at West L *Clarke* by 7 Mar (JG), and 1,125 were at Pool 12 *Jackson* by 17 Mar (SJD). Only single digits were reported after 265 counted 4 Apr at Plum Creek WA *Bremer* (SSP), with the last 2 at Errington M *Polk* (SJD) and 2 at USNWR *Kossuth* (MCK), both 17 May.

**Greater Scaup:** Reported in small numbers from twenty-three locations from all but northwestern Iowa. Most: 15 on 17 Mar at Pool 12 *Jackson* (SJD), 15 on 20 Mar at Clear L *Cerro*



Subadult male Surf Scoter at Crawford Creek RA, Ida, 3 May 2009. Photograph by Jay Gilliam, Norwalk, IA.



*Male Wild Turkey strutting near Walnut Woods SP, Polk, 9 May 2009. Photograph by Jay Gilliam, Norwalk, IA.*

*Gordo* (PH), and 18 on 3 Apr at South Twin L *Calhoun* (SSP). Last: 1 May at Dunbar Sl *Greene* (SJD-details) and 10 May *Marion* (JG, SJD-details).

**Lesser Scaup:** First in the north: 250 on 8 Mar at Clear L *Cerro Gordo* (PH). Most: 8,030 on 17 Mar at Pool 12 *Jackson* (SJD). Numbers dropped off after 11 Apr, when 325 were at South Twin L *Calhoun* and 225 were at Lizard L *Pocahontas* (both SSP). Last: 11 on 17 May at USNWR *Kossuth* (MCK) and a drake 30 May at Ada Hayden P *Story* (WO).

**Surf Scoter:** All: a female 28 Apr–4 May at Saylorville Res *Polk* (JB, JG, SJD), and a drake 3–21 May at Crawford Creek *Ida* (SJD, POR, JG, TLu, GLV, PE). The Crawford Creek bird was photographed 21 May by Adam Hanisch, documenting the third latest spring migrant.

**White-winged Scoter:** The only report was 20 Mar at Grundy County L (RIA, PHA).

**Long-tailed Duck:** All: a female/imm 13 and 14 Mar at Clear L *Cerro Gordo* (PH, CJF), and an adult male 17 Mar at Guttenberg *Clayton* (SJD).

**Bufflehead:** Few noted the first week of Mar (6 Mar at Cone M *Louisa* [DP], 2 on 7 Mar at Saylorville Res *Polk* [JB]) made way for peak counts the second week: 79 on 14 Mar at Twelve Mile L *Union* (JG), 48 on 20 Mar at Clear L *Cerro Gordo* (PH), and 41 on 20 Mar at Diehl Wetlands *Warren* (JS). Late singles were 1 May at Dunbar Sl *Greene* (JG), 3 May at USNWR *Kossuth* (MCK), and 3 May *Sac* (DP).

#### **Common Goldeneye:**

Most: 165 on 17 Mar at Guttenberg *Clayton* (SJD) and 75 on 20 Mar at Clear L *Cerro Gordo* (PH). Last: 4 on 4 Apr at Clear L (PH) and 8 Apr at Prairie Rose SP *Shelby* (JG).

**Hooded Merganser:** Most: 81 on 3 Apr at New L *Woodbury* (POR). One on 23 May at Hawkeye WA *Johnson* (CJC) may indicate nesting.

**Common Merganser:** The expected peaks at the reservoirs: 780 on 7 Mar at Red Rock Res *Marion* (AB), and 1,533 on 13 Mar at Saylorville Res *Polk* (JG). Elsewhere, the most were 137 at Clear L *Cerro Gordo* 20 Mar (PH). Last: a pair 1 May *Emmet* (SSP) and a hen 11 May at Long Pond *Guthrie* (DTh).

**Red-breasted Merganser:** First: 10 at Red Rock Res *Marion* (AB) and a single at West Des Moines *Polk* (JG, JB), both 7 Mar; and 8 Mar at Rapp P *Page* (KDy). Most: 438 on 24 Mar at Saylorville Res *Polk* (SJD). Late hens were found 7 May at L *Sugema Van*



*Horned Grebe at Maffitt Reservoir, Dallas, 16 April 2009. Photograph by Jay Gilliam, Norwalk, IA.*

*Buren* (JLF), 9 May at Jewell Hamilton (WO), and 11 May at Dunbar Sl *Greene* (DTh).

**Ruddy Duck:** First: 3 on 6 Mar at Montrose *Lee* (JWR), 8 Mar at both Rapp P *Page* (K Dy) and Cedar L *Linn* (DP). 74 were at Clear L *Cerro Gordo* by 20 Mar (PH). Peak: 279 on 29 Mar at Saylorville Res *Polk* (JG). A straggler was noted *Linn* 14 May (DP), and several remained through the end of the season at USWR *Kossuth* (MCK).

**Gray Partridge:** Ten pairs were reported from *Boone*, *Carroll*, *Kossuth*, *Hardin*, and *Story*.

**Ruffed Grouse:** There were no reports. Birders make the trek to view dancing prairie-chickens, but few hunt down drumming Ruffed Grouse.

**Greater Prairie-Chicken:** Up to 15 were reported from the Kellerton Ringgold lek (peak 12 Apr AB).

**Northern Bobwhite:** Outside of *Decatur*, where up to 9 were found during

the season, 1 or 2 were located *Lee*, *Louisa*, *Appanoose*, *Madison*, *Woodbury*, and Steve Dinsmore's first local sighting in more than ten years *Boone*.

**Red-throated Loon:** One 22–28 Mar at Badger Creek RA *Madison* was record early (RIA, PHA, JG-details, ph).

**Common Loon:** First: 17 Mar at L Rathbun *Appanoose* (JWR). Loons were reported from twenty locations, with only 12 on 29 Mar at Clear L *Cerro Gordo* (PH), 7 on 4 Apr at Maffitt Res *Dallas* (JG), and 5 on 7 Apr at Gray's L *Polk* (JB) surpassing 1 or 2 birds. Last: 18 May at Bacon Creek P *Woodbury* (GLV) and 29 May *Crawford* (SJD).

**Pied-billed Grebe:** First: 7 Mar at Red Rock Res *Marion* (AB) and 2 on 8 Mar at Little River RA *Decatur* (JG). Most: 45 on 8 Apr at L Anita SP *Cass* (SJD).

**Horned Grebe:** First: 3 on 23 Mar at Pleasant Creek RA *Linn* (DP). One or two were subsequently seen *Page*, *Scott*, *Black Hawk*, *Winneshiek*, *Dallas*, and *Kossuth*. The peak occurred 22 Apr, when 10 were at Little Wall L *Hamilton* (MP) and 16 were at Saylorville Res *Polk* (RIA, PHA). The final bird was at Ada Hayden P *Story* 1 May (WO).

**Red-necked Grebe:** All: 25–27 Mar at Gray's L *Polk* (JB-details, JG-ph) [second earliest], 2 on 11 Apr at Eagle L *Hancock* (PH), 29 Apr at Ada Hayden P *Story* (WO, SJD), 30 Apr at Pleasant Creek RA *Benton/Linn* (JLF, DP), and 2 on 10 May at USNWR *Kossuth* found by Pat Valentik, a visiting birder from Huntsville, Arkansas. One remained at USNWR 21 May (PH).

**Eared Grebe:** First: 24 Mar at Ada

Hayden P *Story* (WO), then 8 Apr both *Adair* and *Audubon* (SJD, JG). Peak counts of 10–16 were from *Pottawattamie*, *Plymouth*, and *Sac* (LJP, BKP, TLu, mob). Reports came from twelve additional counties as far east as Errington M *Polk* 11 May (KVS), and the final 2 on 17 May at Rice L *Worth* (PH).

**Western Grebe:** First: 25 Apr at Grundy County L (SJD). One or two were reported from *Sac* (mob), *Buena Vista* (LAS), *Pottawattamie* (KDy), *Clay* (LAS), *Worth* (three locations PH), *Polk* (SJD, JG), and the last at Mallard M *Cerro Gordo* 27 May (RGo, PH).

**American White Pelican:** The first big influx was 500 on 29 Mar at Sedan Bottoms *Appanoose* (RLC), and 1,000 were at Brown's L *Woodbury* 6 Apr (GLV). 533

were still at *Runnells* WA *Marion* 10 May (SJD).

**Double-crested Cormorant:** First: 21 Mar at both Pin Oak M *Lucas* (JG) and Cone M *Louisa* (DP). Most: 600 on 1 Apr at Gray's L *Polk* (JB) and 720 on 8 Apr at L *Colchester Warren* (JG). 100 were still at Rice L *Worth* 17 May (PH).

**American Bittern:** First: 9 Apr at Ada Hayden P *Story* (WO) and 11 Apr at two locations *Keokuk* (BSc, CRE). One or two were noted in fourteen additional counties, with a peak of 6 on 10 May at Eagle L *Kossuth* (SSP).

**Least Bittern:** First was a calling bird 27 Apr at the Lamoni sewage lagoon *Decatur* (ZMi, NJM) [record early]. From one to three were noted mid-May *Worth*,



*American White Pelican, Black Hawk WA, Sac, 1 May 2009. Photograph by John Bissell, Grimes, IA.*

Winnebago, and Fremont; and in the final days of May Clinton, Palo Alto, Harrison, Woodbury, Polk, and Greene.

**Great Blue Heron:** Jim Sinclair related this behavioral note from Diehl Wetlands Warren: "A Great Blue Heron has taken to plunge diving for fish. The bird flies slowly over the water surface before hesitating and then plunging to the water. The bird only submerges about half of his body as his head and neck plunge deeper into the water. Success rate so far: one for six."

**Great Egret:** First: 4 on 25 Mar at Princeton WA Scott (WMZ). The largest gatherings reported were 30 on 18 Apr and 35 on 9 May at Forney L Fremont (LJP, BKP, KDy), and 38 on 26 Apr at Cone M Louisa (CRE).

**Snowy Egret:** All: 20 Apr at Forney L Fremont (JLF), 3 on 25 Apr Van Buren (RLC), 30 Apr at Maskunkya M Mahaska (DP, MBH), and 10 May at Trumbull L Clay (LAS).

**Little Blue Heron:** One 30 Apr and 1 May at Lime Creek CA Cerro Gordo (CJE, PH) was the only report.

**Cattle Egret:** First: 9 on 16 Apr at Forney L Fremont (KDy), 4 on 19 Apr Story (HZ), and then the most northerly 4 on 24 Apr Kossuth (Megan Simonson fide MCK). Reports of 1–8 egrets were scattered south of a Woodbury/Kossuth/Linn line, with high counts of 15 on 26 Apr Appanoose (RLC), 16 on 1 May Decatur (NJM), and 17 remaining at Forney L 15 May (KDy).

**Green Heron:** First: 23 Apr at Chichaqua WA Polk (SSP) and 26 Apr at Rapp P Page (KDy).

**Black-crowned Night-Heron:** First, all 22 Apr: Owego Wetlands Woodbury (POR), near Colo Ponds Story (SSP), and 3 at Little Wall L Hamilton (MP). Most: 11 on 26 Apr at Rapp P Page (KDy), 13 on 8 May Woodbury (JP), and 17 on 9 May at Forney L Fremont (KDy). From 1–3 were reported from 9 additional counties.

**White-faced Ibis:** First, both 24 Apr: at Rapp P Page and 3 at Forney L Fremont (both KDy). One or two were found Dallas, Boone, Louisa, Polk, Greene, Sioux, Story, Washington, and Warren, with the last on 22 May Boone (SJD). A group of 13 was seen 3 May at Black Hawk WA Sac by attendees of the IOU Spring Meeting, 6 were in Woodbury 8 May (JP), and 14 were at Forney L 9 May (KDy).

**Turkey Vulture:** First: 4 Mar Decatur (NJM) and 6 Mar Jefferson (CRE). A nest with 2 eggs was found 31 May Warren (JS).

**Osprey:** Nesting began with the first reports 1 Apr Polk (JG) and 11 Apr at Brown's L Woodbury (GLV).

**Mississippi Kite:** There were three sightings of 1 or 2 birds at Ashworth P Polk beginning 19 May (JB, AB, JG).

**Bald Eagle:** Most: 155 on 7 Mar at Red Rock Res Marion (AB).

**Northern Harrier:** Four on 8 Mar at Kellerton Grasslands Ringgold (JG) likely included new migrants, but no others were reported until 7 on 1 Apr Decatur (ZMi, NJM). Migrants were only reported through the central third of the state, with possible late May nesters noted in Wayne, Warren, Worth, Emmet, and Howard (JG, SSP, DC).

**Sharp-shinned Hawk:** 13 birds were reported from eight counties through the period, with the last 17 May at Saylorville Res Polk and 22 May Boone (both SJD).

**Cooper's Hawk:** More breeding birds than migrants were reported, with nesting noted Polk, Cerro Gordo, Johnson, Warren, Marshall, Kossuth (3), and Decatur.

**Northern Goshawk:** All: juv 29 Mar at Jester P Polk (JG-details), juv 1–11 Apr at Ada Hayden P Story (WO, SJD), and 9 Apr Decatur (JRL)

**Red-shouldered Hawk:** All: 13 Mar at both George Wyth SP Black Hawk and Sweet M Bremer (both CRE), 3 on 14 Mar at



*Osprey building nest, Don Williams Lake, Boone, 3 April 2009. Photograph by Jim Moreland, Boone, IA.*

Yellow River SF *Allamakee* (DK), 15 Mar at Sand Lake WA *Marshall* (SJD, JG), 27 Mar *Van Buren* (JLF), and 18 May at Slip Bluff P *Decatur* (NJM). At least 3 birds were seen in different Stephens SF *Lucas* locations throughout the period (AB, JG, AMJ).

**Broad-winged Hawk:** First: 3 on 16 Apr at Slip Bluff P *Decatur* (NJM, ZMi) and 17 Apr at Stone SP *Woodbury* (POR). A major flight was witnessed 23 Apr *Decatur*, with at least 1,000, and perhaps as many as 1,500, passing through with a front over a 45 minute span (BBa). Elsewhere, high counts were 12, including one ad dark-morph, on 28 Apr at Call SP *Kossuth* (MCK) and 12 on 3 May at *Moorehead* P *Ida* (JG). Territorial birds were noted *Lucas*, *Boone*, *Johnson*, and *Polk* (AB, BSc, DTh).

**Swainson's Hawk:** Reported from thirteen counties, mostly as individuals, with the first on 4 and 8 Apr *Dallas* (JB, JG,

SJD), and then 9 Apr at Neal Smith NWR *Jasper* (KVS). A flight of 41 was seen 21 Apr *Fremont* (KDY). Late May birds included a pair 19 and 23 May *Mitchell* (PH), 24 May at Springbrook SP *Guthrie* (AMJ), and 25 May at West L *Clarke* (AMJ).

**Red-tailed Hawk:** A burst of 25 migrants passed by Bronson *Woodbury* 22 Mar (TLu), the same day a Harlan's Hawk was noted *Clarke* (AB).

**FERRUGINOUS HAWK:** An adult was observed 24 Mar at grasslands south of Lacey-Keosauqua SP *Van Buren* (\*JWR).

**Rough-legged Hawk:** From 1 to 4 were reported until 1 Apr from eight counties, with later stragglers 11 Apr near Fort Dodge *Webster* (POR) and 22 Apr at USNWR *Kossuth* (MCK).

**Golden Eagle:** All: 2 Mar *Dallas* (RIA, PHA), imm 7 Mar *O'Brien* (LAS), ad 13 Mar *Decatur* (NJM, ZMi), imm 14 Mar *Warren*



*Adult Peregrine Falcon at the American Republic Insurance building in downtown Des Moines, Polk, 17 April 2009. Photograph by Jay Gilliam, Norwalk, IA.*

(AB), ad 16 Mar *Mitchell* (SJD), and imm 27 Mar *Van Buren* (JLF).

**Merlin:** Seventeen individuals were seen, the final at Riverton WA *Fremont* 7 May (Jon Dunn fide KDy).

**Peregrine Falcon:** The first migrant was noted 19 Apr near Pilot Knob SP *Winnebago* (SSP). Seventeen additional migrants were observed, with a peak of 3 on 13 May *Boone* (SJD), and the last on 14 May *Fremont* (KDy).

**Yellow Rail:** All: 2 on 22 Apr near Colo Ponds *Story* (SSP-details), and one flushed while mowing prairie 3 May *Story* (Karl Kurtz).

**KING RAIL:** One was found during marshbird surveys 28 and 29 May *Greene* (Tyler Harms, SJD).

**Virginia Rail:** First: 13 Apr *Decatur* (BBa, NJM, ZMi) and 18 Apr at Chichaqua WA *Polk* (DTh). Two at Nahant M *Scott* 24 May (WMZ) were outside their usual breeding range. The highest concentration was found at Eagle L *Kossuth* 29 May, when 8 were heard vocalizing (SSP).

**Sora:** First: 3 on 13 Apr *Decatur* (NJM) and 19 Apr at South Sycamore Bottoms *Johnson* (DP). Most: 23 on 26 Apr *Decatur* (ZMi) and 25 on 3 May at Otter Creek M *Tama* (CJC).

**Common Moorhen:** All: 29 Apr at Harrier M *Boone* (SJD), 3 May at Chichaqua WA *Polk* (BE), 1–3 birds 7–17 May at Errington M *Polk* (DP, SAS, BE, JG, SJD), 11 May at Muskrat Sl *Jones* (SJD), 11 May at Big Wall L *Wright* (SJD), 18–21 May *Decatur*



*Virginia Rail, Boone, 13 May 2009. Photograph by Stephen J. Dinsmore, Ames, IA.*



(ZMi, NJM), and 24 May at Black Hawk WA Sac (Stan Buman).

**American Coot:** Most: 7,000 on 25 Mar at Princeton M Scott (WMZ), 3,500 on 28 Mar at Anderson L Hamilton (SJD), and 2,000 on 29 Mar at Sedan Bottoms Appanoose (RLC).

**Sandhill Crane:** First, both 6 Mar: 8 at Riverton WA Fremont and 8 at Rapp P Page (both KDy). Cranes were some of the most-reported birds this spring, with sightings of 1–6 birds scattered across all but the northwestern corner of the state. A flock of 28 on 28 Mar at Riverton (LJP, BKP) may have belonged to the migratory population that passes to the west of Iowa. Adults with young were reported from Chichaqua WA Polk (BE, JG, SJD), Thorpe P Winnebago (CJF), and Cardinal M Winneshiek (EB).

**Black-bellied Plover:** First: 26 Apr at Saylorville Res Polk (BE) and 1 May at Black Hawk WA Sac (JG, JB). Most: 12 on 16 May on flooded fields Mills (JG). From 1 to 4 were reported from Woodbury, Fremont, and Clay (POR, GLV, KDy, LAS TLu), until the last lingerer at Jester P Polk 31 May (BE).

**American Golden-Plover:** First: 21 Mar Keokuk (JWR) and 4 on 21 Mar at Maskunkya M Mahaska (JG, SJD). The early peak was 53 on 11 Apr at Snake Creek M Greene (LGD), and the later peak was 90 on 11 May at Errington M Polk (KVS). Last: 4 on 14 May Linn (PH) and 16 May near Kellerton Ringgold (JG).

**SNOWY PLOVER:** Two birds lingering at their locations were relocated



*Snowy Plover at Cherry Glen Beach, Saylorville Reservoir, Polk, 25 April 2009. Photograph by Jay Gilliam, Norwalk, IA.*

by many thrilled birders: 22–27 Apr at Dairy Ponds Woodbury (\*POR), and 25–27 Apr at Saylorville Res Polk (\*JB, \*AB, \*HZ, \*Leland Searles).

**Semipalmated Plover:** First: 18 Apr at Saylorville Res Polk (AB, JG), and 2 on 22 Apr at both Tannery Ponds Woodbury (POR) and Buckshot M Appanoose (RLC). The peak occurred 17 May when 48 were at Dan Green Sl Clay (LAS) and 40 were in a flooded field Jefferson (CRE). The last away from Dan Green Sl, where they remained through the end of the period, were 8 on 24 May at Table Marsh WMA Woodbury (TLu).

**Piping Plover:** All: One or two were found at Saylorville Res Polk 19–27 Apr (JG, SJD, TSS), and then again on 14 May (JB), 2 on 24 Apr at Dan Green Sl Clay (LAS), 2 on 25 Apr and 11 May at Port Neal Ponds Woodbury (POR), and 2 and 3 May at Black Hawk WA Sac (mob).

**Black-necked Stilt:**

All: 29 Apr at Hawkeye WA Johnson (CJC, DP, CRE), 2 on 1 May at Cone M Louisa (JF), and 14–15 May at Riverton WA Fremont (KDy, JG).

**American Avocet:**

First: 12 on 23 Apr Woodbury (TLu), 28 on 25 Apr at Saylorville Res Polk (AB, JB, KVS), and reports of 12–22 Warren, Johnson, and Page the next day. After that initial burst, only 1–6 were seen in May Louisa, Fremont, Polk, Union, Clay, with the last single 24 May at Table Marsh WMA Woodbury (TLu).

**Spotted Sandpiper:**

First: 18 Apr at Belva-Deer RA Keokuk (CRE) and 22 Apr at Tannery Ponds Woodbury (POR).

**Solitary Sandpiper:**

First: 18 Apr at Hawkeye WA Johnson (DP) and 19 Apr Decatur (ZMi). Thirty-five flight calls were heard from nocturnal migrants over Ames Story 13 May (SSP), while the last bird spotted on the ground was 17 May at Ada Hayden P Story (WO).

**Greater Yellowlegs:**

One 7 Mar at Banner WA Warren tied third earliest (AB-ph), and 3 were at Riverton WA Fremont the next day (KDy). 30 on 26 Apr at Cone M Louisa (CRE) was the only report of more than 5 birds. Last: 27 May at Buffalo Creek WA Delaware (BSc).

**Willet:** First: 18 Apr



*American Avocets found in a group of 16 at a temporary wetland in Warren, 26 April 2009. Photograph by Jay Giliam, Norwalk, IA.*



*Willet, Saylorville Reservoir, Polk, 26 April 2009. Photograph by John Bissell, Grimes, IA.*



*Hudsonian Godwit in sheetwater in rural Fremont, 16 May 2009. Photograph by Jay Gilliam, Norwalk, IA.*

at Saylorville Res *Polk* (SJD) and 19 Apr *Woodbury* (TLu). Peak flock size ranged 11–27 birds 24 Apr–7 May *Page*, *Polk*, *Story*, *Johnson*, *Sac*, and *Fremont*. Last: 4 on 14 May at Nahant M *Scott* (WMZ), 17 May at Saylorville Res (JB, SJD, JG), and 6 on 31 May at Dan Green Sl *Clay* (LAS).

**Lesser Yellowlegs.** First: 10 on 21 Apr at Riverton WA *Fremont* (KDy), 22 Mar at Littlefield P *Audubon* (JG), and 2 on 22 Apr *Woodbury* (TLu). Most: 400 on 25 Apr at Coralville Res *Johnson* (CRE), 338 on 1 May at Harrier M *Boone* (SJD), and 300 on 7 May at Riverton WA *Fremont* (Jon Dunn fide KDy). The last reported away from Dan Green Sl *Clay* was 17 May at Polk City WA *Polk* (JB).

**Upland Sandpiper:** First, all 18 Apr: at Neal Smith NWR *Jasper* (DTh), at Kellerton Grasslands *Ringgold* (RLC), and 6 in *Decatur* (NJM). Also reported from *Polk*, *Woodbury*,

*Greene*, *Kossuth*, *Madison*, *Fremont*, and *Story*.

**WHIMBREL:** A flock of six was photographed 15 May at Forney L *Fremont* (\*KDy).

**Hudsonian Godwit:** First: 25 on 18 Apr at Forney L *Fremont* (LJP, BKP). Numbers peaked in the western tier counties 8 May, with 141 at Riverton *Fremont* (KDy) and 48 *Woodbury* (POR). Single digit numbers were scattered across ten counties east to *Johnson* and *Linn* (DP, JF). Last, both 31 May: 5 at Snake Creek M *Greene* (LGD) and 3 at Dan Green Sl *Clay* (LAS).

**Marbled Godwit:** First: 21 Apr at Riverton WA *Fremont* (KDy). From

1 to 8 were reported *Polk*, *Woodbury*, *Johnson*, and *Montgomery* until 16 May. On 17 May, 18 were seen in flight at Saylorville Res *Polk* (SJD-details, JG), 29 were at Dan Green Sl *Clay* (LAS), and a single was at Plum Creek WA *Bremer* (SSP).

**Ruddy Turnstone:** First: 26 Apr at Saylorville Res *Polk* (BE) [record early]. One or two were sporadically observed there 16–30 May (JB, JG, SJD, DTh, KVS). Elsewhere, 2 were in *Fremont* 16 May (JG), 9 were at McIntosh SP *Cerro Gordo* 17 and 18 May (PH, CJF), and singles were at Dan Green Sl *Clay* 18 and 24 May (LAS, MCK) and Mallard M *Cerro Gordo* 21 May (PH).

**Sanderling:** All: up to 10 at Saylorville Res *Polk* 26 Apr–30 May (SJD, JB, BE, ZMi, NJM, KVS), 2 on 2 May at Black Hawk WA *Sac* (AB), 4 on 8 May *Woodbury* (JP), 3 on 11 May at New L *Woodbury* (POR), 5 on 13

May at Black Hawk L *Sac* (PE), and 31 May at Dan Green Sl *Clay* (LAS).

**Semipalmated Sandpiper:** First: 4 on 25 Apr at New L *Woodbury* (POR), 3 on 26 Apr at Jester P *Polk* (JG), and 2 on 26 Apr at Cone M *Louisa* (CRE). Most: 423 on 22 May at Saylorville Res *Polk* (SJD), and 450 on 24 May at Dan Green Sl *Clay* (MCK), where 100 remained at the end of the period (LAS). 200 were still at Riverton WA *Fremont* 28 May (KDy).

**Western Sandpiper:** All: one was well described 2 May at Black Hawk WA *Sac* (POR, AB, CJC, JB, JLF), 5 on 8 May *Woodbury* (JP-details), 3 on 11 May at Secret L *Fremont* (KDy), and 17 May in a flooded field along the Skunk R *Jefferson* (CRE-details).

**Least Sandpiper:** First: 2 on 29 Mar

at Polk City WA *Polk* (JG), followed by 121 on 8 Apr at Riverton WA *Fremont* (KDy). Most: 178 on 14 May at Ames *Story* (SJD). Last: 10 on 31 May at Teal Basin *Cerro Gordo* (CJF).

**White-rumped Sandpiper:** First: 2 on 2 May at Black Hawk WA *Sac* (JB JG, AB). 117 were noted at Ames *Story* 16 May (SJD). Numbers built at Riverton *Fremont* from 120 on 14 May to 1,400 on 28 May (KDy). 600 were at Dan Green Sl *Clay* 24 May (MCK), and 110 remained there 31 May (LAS). Eight were still in *Polk* 31 May (DK).

**Baird's Sandpiper:** First: 21 Mar *Mahaska* (JG, SJD) and 21 Mar at Riverton WA *Fremont* (KDy). Other than 33 on 2 and 8 Apr at Riverton WA (KDy), only 1–7 were reported at seven additional locations, with



Nine Ruddy Turnstones, McIntosh Point on Clear Lake, Cerro Gordo, 17 May 2009. Photograph by Paul Hertzell, Mason City, IA.

the final 7 on 24 May at Dan Green Sl Clay (MCK).

**Pectoral Sandpiper:**

First, all 21 Mar: 30 at Riverton WA *Fremont* (KDy), 27 *Mahaska* (SJD), and 7 *Keokuk* (JWR). Most: 400 on 2 Apr at Riverton WA (KDy), and 400 on 25 Apr at Coralville Res *Johnson* (CRE), after which numbers quickly dropped off. Last: 19 on 21 May at Teal Basin *Cerro Gordo* (PH), 21 on 28 May at Riverton WA (KDy), and a single 31 May at Polk City WA *Polk* (RLC).

**Dunlin:** First: 2 Apr at Saylorville Res *Polk* (JG-details, SJD) [ties third earliest]. Small numbers were encountered until mid-May, with the peak in late May: 194 on 24 May at Dan Green Sl Clay (MCK), 59 on 28 May at Riverton WA *Fremont* (KDy), 77 on 31 May at Jester P *Polk* (BE), and 112 remaining 31 May at Dan Green Sl (LAS).

**Stilt Sandpiper:** First: 4 on 8 Apr at Riverton WA *Fremont* (KDy-details) [third earliest], then not until 5 on 3 May at Harrier M *Boone* (AB). Few were reported, but as far east as 10 May at Cone M *Louisa* (DP) and 4 on 11 May *Linn* (BSc). Most: 14 on 13 May *Decatur* (NJM, ZMi) and 39 on 28 May at Riverton WA (KDy). Six remained at Dan Green Sl Clay 31 May (LAS).

**Buff-breasted Sandpiper:** One was spotted 2 May on a field trip at Dunbar Sl *Greene* during the IOU Spring Meeting (CJF).

**RUFF:** Jim Forde photographed a Ruff acquiring white breeding plumage at Cone M *Louisa* 28 Apr.

**Short-billed Dowitcher:** First: 2 on 1 May *Guthrie* (JG), and then 18 at Harrier M *Boone* (AB), Colo Ponds *Story* (DP), and 7



*Wilson's Snipe*, Ames, Story, 25 April 2009. Photograph by Stephen J. Dinsmore, Ames, IA.

at Secret L *Fremont* (KDy), all 3 May. Most: 12 on 8 May at Riverton WA *Fremont* (KDy) and 13 on 17 May at Plum Creek WA *Bremer* (SSP). Elsewhere, only 1–3 noted *Linn*, *Kossuth*, *Polk*, *Mitchell* (PH, DP, MCK, JG), and the last 2 on 24 May at Dan Green Sl Clay (MCK).

**Long-billed Dowitcher:** First: 10 on 24 Mar *Fremont* (KDy), then 3 Apr at Green Island WA *Jackson* (CRE). 1–6 were seen *Polk*, *Story*, *Woodbury*, and *Johnson* (JG, MP, DK, TLu, DP, JB), with a central Iowa peak of 25 on 25 Apr at Saylorville Res *Polk* (AB). Last and most: 125 on 7 May at Riverton WA *Fremont* (KDy).

**Wilson's Snipe:** First: 17 Mar *Decatur* (BBa). Most: 42 on 5 Apr at Ames *Story* (SJD). Two winnowing, territorial birds were observed 25 May at *Panicum Pr Worth* (SSP).

**American Woodcock:** First: 14 Mar *Jefferson* (DCP), 15 Mar at Grammer Grove WA *Marshall* (MP), and one was as far north as *Algona Kossuth* 18 Mar (MCK). An adult with a small fledgling was found 16 May *Palo Alto* (SSP), and a nest was discovered 19 May *Decatur* (ZMi).

### **Wilson's Phalarope:**

First: 21 Mar at Riverton WA *Fremont* (POR, KDy) [second earliest], then not until 22 Apr at Buckshot M *Appanoose* (RLC). 11–37 were seen *Decatur*, *Carroll*, *Woodbury*, *Sac*, *Linn*, and *Union* 1–15 May (NJM, MP, JP, PE, PH, KVS). The highest concentrations were in *Fremont*: 73 on 9 May at Forney L and 126 on 14 May at Riverton WA (both KDy). The last single was at Moeckley Pr Polk 17 May (JG).

### **Red-necked Phalarope:**

First, all 10 May: 2 *Linn* (JF, DP, BSc), *Errington M Polk* (SAS), and *Runnells WA Marion* (SJD, JG). Then: 1–3 on 14–29 May at New L *Woodbury* (POR), 5 on 14 May and 2 on 16 May at Riverton WA *Fremont* (KDy, JG), 2 on 14 May at Dunbar Sl *Greene* (RIA, PHA), 17 May at Saylorville Res *Polk* (SJD), 17 May at Polk City WA *Polk* (JG), 4 on 17 May along Lewis Bottoms Rd *Linn* (DLF), and 31 May at Dan Green Sl *Clay* (LAS).

**Laughing Gull:** An adult observed at Moline, Illinois 25 May was also seen flying over the Iowa side of the Mississippi R *Scott* (SMF).

**Franklin's Gull:** First: 21 Mar at L Manawa *Pottawattamie* (Kim Eckert fide LJP), 29 Mar at Saylorville Res *Polk* (JG, JB, RLC), and 31 Mar *Linn* (DLF). Most: 260 on 15 May at Forney L *Fremont* (KDy) and 641 on 17 May at Saylorville Res *Polk* (SJD). Last: 5 on 24 May at Dan Green Sl *Clay* (MCK) and a single at Saylorville Res 29 May (DTh).

**Bonaparte's Gull:** The first was at pit along Interstate 29 *Mills* 16 Mar (RIA, PHA). Few were reported, with the most 22 on 19 Apr at Jester P *Polk* (JG) and 10 on 3 May at



*Wilson's Phalaropes, at IOU Spring Meeting, Carroll, 3 May 2009. Photograph by Dick Stilwell, West Des Moines, IA.*

USNWR *Kossuth* (MCK). The last was alone 10 May at Red Rock Res *Marion* (JG).

**Ring-billed Gull:** Most: 3,400 on 7 Mar at Red Rock Res *Marion* (AB), and 4,000 on 21 Mar at L Manawa *Pottawattamie* (Kim Eckert fide LJP). Five were still at Saylorville Res *Polk* 29 May (DTh).

**Herring Gull:** A single 1st-year hung out with the Ring-billed Gulls 29 May at Saylorville Res *Polk* (DTh).

**Thayer's Gull:** All: one 1st-year 2–8 Mar at Cedar L *Linn* (BSc), and another 2 Apr at Saylorville Res *Polk* (SJD).

**Glaucous Gull:** All: a 1st-year 14 Mar *Polk* (AB), a 1st-year 21 Mar at L Manawa *Pottawattamie* (Kim Eckert fide LJP), and a 1st-year 24 Mar at Ft Madison *Lee* (JWR).

**Least Tern:** First: 8 May at Port Neal Ponds *Woodbury* (POR) [third earliest]. Also at this location: 4 on 23 May and 2 on 30 May (POR). Two were seen along the Missouri R *Fremont* 16 May (KVS), and one was at Ames *Story* 29 May (SJD).

**Caspian Tern:** First: 3 on 26 Apr at Jester P *Polk* (SJD, JB, KVS, JG, BE) and 26 Apr *Woodbury* (POR). Most: 42 on 10 May at Red Rock Res *Marion* (SJD), and 55 on

17 May at Saylorville Res *Polk* (SJD), which were also the last.

**Black Tern:** First: 2 on 8 May at Mallard M *Cerro Gordo* (PH). Mid-May yielded peaks of 220 on 14 May at Dunbar Sl *Greene* (RIA, PHA), 1,000 on 14 May *Linn* (BSc), and 320 on 15 May at Forney L *Fremont* (KDy). Late birds still lingered 28 May: 327 at Riverton WA *Fremont* (KDy) and 100 at Forney L (LJP, BKP).

**Common Tern:** First: 29 Apr at Cone M *Louisa* (CRE-details) and 5 on 10 May at Runnells WA *Marion* (JG, SJD-details). 1–3 were reported from *Boone*, *Hardin*, *Worth*, *Polk*, and *Clay* (SJD, MP, PH, JG, LAS, RGo). Last: 27 May *Delaware* (CRE-details, BSc-details) and 12 on 27 May at Clear L *Cerro Gordo* (PH).

**Forster's Tern:** First, all 25 Apr: 2 at Coralville Res *Johnson* (CRE), 2 and 7 at Saylorville Res *Polk* (JG, JB), and 3 *Woodbury* (POR). Most: 38 on 5 May at Spirit L *Dickinson* (MCK) and 27 on 8 May at Riverton WA *Fremont* (KDy). Last: 30 May *Monona* (TLu) and 5 on 31 May at Mallard M *Cerro Gordo* (PH).

**Eurasian Collared-Dove:** They were noted from 22 counties from all corners of the state, but they were apparently ignored in huge central Iowa block without reports bounded by *Carroll*, *Hancock*, *Benton*, and *Decatur*.

**White-winged Dove:** One noted 5 Apr *Decatur* (NJM) set the new record early mark, and another became a yard bird for Keith Dyche 25–27 May at Shenandoah *Page*.

**Yellow-billed Cuckoo:** First: 2 May at Artesian L *Carroll* (TLu), then 17 May both *Decatur* (NJM, ZMi) and *Polk* (SJD). Fourteen additional birds were reported from eight counties.

**Black-billed Cuckoo:** First: 8 May at Squaw Creek P *Linn* (DP) and 14 May

*Johnson* (CRE). Another 9 singles were reported across the state.

**Barn Owl:** All: 26 Mar at Neal Smith NWR *Jasper* (KVS), 30 Apr–3 May *Decatur* (NJM), and 2 on 3 May *Carroll* (POR).

**Snowy Owl:** The winter bird near Dysart *Tama* stayed until 3 Mar (DP, BSc, CRE), the *Kossuth* bird north of Wesley lingered until 5 Mar (John Morrison fide MCK), 6 Mar at Spring Run *Dickinson* (ETh), and 7 Mar *Clay* (Dwight Rutter photos fide LAS).

**Long-eared Owl:** All: one was seen several times *Decatur* 1 Mar–13 Apr (POR, JRL, NJM, ZMi), 13 Mar at Cone M *Louisa* (JLF), 16 Mar on the NIACC campus *Cerro Gordo* (PH), and 10 Apr Wolf Creek RA *Grundy* (MP).

**Short-eared Owl:** From one to four were observed *Decatur*, *Fremont*, *Warren*, *Pottawattamie*, *Jasper*, *Woodbury*, *Worth*, *Clay*, and *Story*, with the last near Barringer Sl *Clay* 3 May (SSP).

**Northern Saw-whet Owl:** All: 4 and 14 Mar at Grammer Grove WA *Marshall* (MP), 8 Mar at Moorehead P *Ida* (DoP), 13–15 Mar at George Wyth SP *Black Hawk* (CRE, SJD, JG), and 17 Mar at Volga River RA *Fayette* (SJD).

**Common Nighthawk:** First: 24 Apr at Norwalk *Warren* (JG) and 1 May *Decatur* (NJM). 62 on 29 May at Blue L *Monona* (SJD) was the only large group reported.

**Chuck-will's-widow:** An expected *Fremont* aural observation occurred 22 May at Green Hollow WA (KDy).

**Whip-poor-will:** Matthew Torres noted the first *Decatur* singer 19 Apr, and a nest with 2 eggs was located 17 May (NJM). Larry Dau thought them nesting behind his house *Boone* 30 May, and one was away from usual nesting areas 31 May at the Shellrock Greenbelt *Cerro Gordo* (CJF).

**Chimney Swift:** First: 18 Apr *Wash-*



*Loggerhead Shrike, near Bjorkboda Marsh, Boone, 1 April 2009. Photograph by Jim Moreland, Boone, IA.*

ington in the south (CRE), and 28 Apr *Palo Alto* in the north (SSP). 136 entered a roost chimney 24 May at *Algona Kossuth* (MCK).

**Ruby-throated Hummingbird:** First: 25 Apr at *Waterloo Black Hawk* (KDM), 25 Apr near *Osceola Clarke* (Steve Harvey), 26 Apr at *Robins Linn* (Matt Baumann), and 27 Apr *Warren* (JG).

**Red-headed Woodpecker:** The only indication of migration reported was 39 on 15 Apr *Dallas* (TL).

**Yellow-bellied Sapsucker:** Movement of multiple individuals was noted beginning 1 Apr at *Algona Kossuth*, with a peak of 10 on 14 Apr (MCK). Nesting was confirmed 4 May at *Bacon Creek P Woodbury* (POR), and possible nesters were observed late May *Kossuth*, *Worth*, and *Hancock* (MCK, PH, TLu).

**Northern Flicker:** A red-shafted individual was seen 19 Mar at *Owego Wetlands Woodbury* (GLV).

**Pileated Woodpecker:** They were reported in their usual range west to *Kossuth*, *Boone*, and *Decatur*.

**Olive-sided Flycatcher:** First: 14 May at *Matsell Bridge WA Linn* (PH) and 16 May at *Amana Woods Iowa* (DP). Last: 29

May near *Graettinger Palo Alto* (SSP) and 30 May at *L Macbride Johnson* (CRE).

**Eastern Wood-Pewee:** First reported from the north: 2 on 4 May at *Bacon Creek P Woodbury* (POR) and 9 May at *Pilot Knob SP Winnebago* (SSP).

**Yellow-bellied Flycatcher:** First: 18 May at *Starr's Cave Des Moines* (DP), 21 May at *Parker's Woods Cerro Gordo* (RGo), and 21 May at both *Call SP* and *Smith WA Kossuth* (MCK, PH). Late

birds were 30 May at *Table Marsh WMA Woodbury*, and into June *Kossuth* (MCK).

**Acadian Flycatcher:** None were reported northwest of 19 May at *Walnut Woods SP Polk* (JG) and 20–30 May at *Grammer Grove WA Marshall* (MP).

**Alder Flycatcher:** First: 17 May at *Walnut Woods SP Polk* (JG, SJD) and 18 May at *Squaw Creek P Linn* (DP). Widespread movement was still evident 31 May, with birds noted *Monona*, *Polk*, *Johnson*, *Kossuth*, and 8 in *Decatur* (TLu, RLC, CRE, MCK, NJM).

**Willow Flycatcher:** First: 10 May *Decatur* (ZMi, NJM) and 10 May at *Red Rock Res Marion* (SJD, JG). The highest concentration reported was 19 on 27 May near *Prairie Gold WA Palo Alto* (SSP).

**Least Flycatcher:** First: 25 Apr *Decatur* (NJM-details) [ties record early] and 28 Apr at *Fox Hills WA Wapello* (CRE). Peak numbers were 10 on 17 May at *Lake Wapello SP Davis* (RLC), 19 on 17 May at *Plum Creek WA Bremer* (SSP), and 13 on 18 May near *Otterville Bridge WMA Buchanon* (SSP).

**Eastern Phoebe:** One IDed by voice 4 Mar *Decatur* was second earliest on record



(NJM), and the next report was 14 Mar Warren (JS).

**Great Crested Flycatcher:** First: 2 on 23 Apr *Decatur* (BBa), 2 on 25 Apr at Lacey-Keosauqua SP *Van Buren* (RLC), and 25 Apr at Coralville Res *Johnson* (CRE, DP).

**Western Kingbird:** First: 28 Apr *Fremont* (KDY). In central Iowa, they returned to the Capitol Complex and along MLK Parkway at Des Moines *Polk* (AMJ, JB, JG), and Voas Nature Center *Dallas* (TL).

**Eastern Kingbird:** First: 18 Apr at Sedan Bottoms *Appanoose* (TJ) [ties second earliest] and 23 Apr *Wapello* (CRE).

**FORK-TAILED FLYCATCHER:** In an almost unimaginable coincidence, Mary Ann Gregory coordinated the viewing of a second Fork-tailed Flycatcher within miles and seventeen months of Iowa's first. Discovered by a groundskeeper at the Dysart Golf Club *Tama*, the bird was documented 25 and 26 Apr (\*Mary Ann Gregory, \*MP, \*AB, \*SJD), and last seen the morning of the 27th.

**Loggerhead Shrike:** First: 14 Mar *Adams* (JG). Singles and a few pairs were noted in twenty counties north to *Plymouth*, *Ida*, *Winebag*, *Worth*, *Poweshiek*, and *Johnson* (TLu, SJD, JB, SSP, DP, MP).

**Northern Shrike:** Singles were seen in fourteen counties, with the last stragglers 29 Mar *Winnebago* (DC), 29 Mar at Hickory Hills P *Tama* (TSS), and 30 Mar *Hancock* (PH).

**White-eyed Vireo:** First: 3 May at both Stephens SF *Lucas* (AB) and L Macbride *Johnson* (CRE), where 5 were located 30 May

(CRE). Northernmost birds were 14 May at Pleasant Creek RA *Linn* (BSc, PH), 23 May at Mines of Spain *Dubuque* (KVS), and 27 May at Grammer Grove WA *Marshall* (MP). Polk was the only other county with reports (SJD, JG, KVS).

**Bell's Vireo:** First: 5 May at West Lake P *Scott* (WMZ). They can be quite common in the southern half of the state: 13 on 24 May *Woodbury* (TLu), 6 on 25 May at Red Feather Pr *Polk* (DTh), and 8 at the Mallard Ponds area of Hawkeye WA *Johnson* (CJC).

**Yellow-throated Vireo:** First: 26 Apr *Decatur* (NJM) and 28 Apr at Fox Hills WA *Wapello* (CRE).

**Blue-headed Vireo:** First: 25 Apr at Urbandale *Polk* (BE) and 2 on 26 Apr *Decatur* (NJM). Most: 5 on 4 May at Smith WA *Kossuth* (MCK). Last: 24 May at both Bacon Creek P *Woodbury* (POR) and Ada Hayden P *Story* (WO).

**Warbling Vireo:** First: 25 Apr at Lacey-Keosauqua SP *Van Buren* (RLC) and 3 on 25



*White-eyed Vireo, Clear Creek Trail, Coralville, Johnson, 9 May 2009. Photograph by Mark Brown, Iowa City, IA.*

Apr *Decatur* (NJM). Most: 10 on 24 May at Lizard Creek WA *Webster* (MHB), and 12 on 25 May at Hawkeye WA *Johnson* (CJC).

**Philadelphia Vireo:** First: 8 May at Ada Hayden P *Story* (WO), and 10 May at both Grammer Grove WA *Marshall* (MP) and *Decatur* (NJM). 1–3 were noted from eight additional counties. Last: 24 May at Lizard Creek WA *Webster* (MHB), 24 May at Cardinal M *Winneshiek* (DC), and 2 on 27 May at Smith WA *Kossuth* (MCK).

**Red-eyed Vireo:** First: 3 May *Decatur* (NJM) and 6 May at L Macbride *Johnson* (DP). Most: 10 on 21 May at Eldon WA *Davis* (CRE), 15 on 24 May at Hanging Rock Woods *Johnson* (CJC), and 10 on 24 May at Lizard Creek WA *Webster* (MBH).

**Blue Jay:** Ninety silent migrants passed over Smith WA *Kossuth* 4 May (MCK).

**BLACK-BILLED MAGPIE:** Nesting was observed 21 Apr along Butcher Road *Plymouth* (TLu, POR).

**Purple Martin:** First: 2 on 3 Apr

*Decatur* (ZMi, NJM) and 4 Apr at Blue Flag M *Warren* (JG). Denny Thompson reported Purple Martins as very common in central Iowa, while Bill Scheible considered them quite uncommon in *Linn*. Most, and the only double-digit report: 65 on 7 May *Decatur* (NJM).

**Tree Swallow:** First: 16 Mar at Otter Creek M *Tama* (MP), and 17 Mar at both Goose L *Clinton* (SJD) and L Rathbun *Appanoose* (RLC).

**VIOLET-GREEN SWALLOW:** Iowa's first Violet-green Swallow was discovered foraging over a small, garbage-strewn pond 14 May near Hawarden *Sioux* by visiting out-of-state birders (\*Ken Hollinga, \*Dan Reinking). They were able to obtain a single blurry photograph of the bird in flight that shows the green back, purple tail, and white flank patches wrapping up the sides of the rump. Unfortunately, the bird was not relocated.

**Northern Rough-winged Swallow:**

First: 3 on 7 Apr *Decatur* (NJM, ZMi) and 12 Apr at Polk City WA *Polk* (KVS).

**Bank Swallow:** First: 25 Apr at Coralville Res *Johnson* (CRE) and 26 Apr at Jester P *Polk* (JB, JG, KVS). Most: 200 on 9 May at Hawkeye WA *Johnson* (CJC).

**Cliff Swallow:** First: 2 on 18 Apr at Saylorville Res *Polk* (AB). Most: 75 on 9 May at Hawkeye WA *Johnson* (CJC).

**Barn Swallow:** First: 2 on 11 Apr *Decatur* (NJM) and 12 Apr at Polk City WA *Polk* (KVS). Seventy-five were with the swallow flocks at Hawkeye WA *Johnson* 9 May (CJC).



Warbling Vireo, Lizard Creek Wildlife Area, Webster, 24 May 2009. Photograph by Mark Brown, Iowa City, IA.



*Sedge Wren, South Sycamore Bottoms, Johnson, 9 May 2009. Photograph by Mark Brown, Iowa City, IA.*

**Red-breasted Nuthatch:** Three birds were noted in Mar, two in Apr, and three in May, all from the southeast quarter of the state. The last was at Glendale Cemetery *Polk* 17 May (JG, SJD).

**Brown Creeper:** Winter birds seemed to disappear, as there were no Mar reports. First: 1 Apr at *Liscomb Marshall* (MP) and 5 Apr at *Cedar Rapids Linn* (DP). Most: 11 on 12 Apr *Decatur*, where one was still found 10 May (NJM). Also late were 2 on 3 May at *Black Hawk L Sac* (DP), and a singing male in breeding habitat at *Troy Mills WA Buchanan* 24 May (CRE).

**Carolina Wren:** Probably under-reported, they were only noted *Des Moines, Jefferson, Davis, Decatur, Warren, Polk, and Hardin* (7 Apr and 12 May at *Pine L SP, MP*) in the east; and during Mar *Fremont, Mills, and Woodbury* in the west.

**BEWICK'S WREN:** A regular at the junkyard near *Argyle Lee* was first spotted

14 Apr (CF). One was observed and heard singing 5 May *Decatur* (BBa-details).

**House Wren:** First: 18 Apr *Decatur* (NJM).

**Winter Wren:** First: 39 Mar at *Cone M Louisa* (DP) and 3 Apr at *Pine L SP Hardin* (MP). Last: 28 Apr at *Ada Hayden P Story* (WO) and 4 on 30 Apr at *Call SP Kossuth* (MCK).

**Sedge Wren:** First: 2 on 23 Apr at *Chichaqua WA Polk* (SSP) [ties second earliest] and 2 on 24 Apr *Worth* (SSP) [ties third earliest]. Most: 37 on 7 May at *Panicum Pr Worth* (SSP).

**Marsh Wren:** First: 18 Apr *Fremont* (KDY) and 2 on 23 Apr *Decatur* (ZMi). Shane

Patterson counted 62 singing males at *Eagle L Kossuth* 10 May.

**Golden-crowned Kinglet:** First: 18 Apr at *Cedar Creek Timber Jefferson* (CRE) and 22 Apr at *Saylorville Res Polk* (JB). Most: 15 on 11 Apr at *Pilot Knob SP Hancock* (JB). Last: 21 Apr at *George Wyth SP Black Hawk* (CRE) and 2 on 23 Apr at *Chichaqua WA Polk* (SSP).

**Ruby-crowned Kinglet:** First: 18 Mar *Decatur* (\*Niyole Livingston) [record early]. The high count was 15 on 21 Apr at *Hickory Hills P Tama* (CRE). Last: 17 May at both *Saylorville Res Polk* (JB) and 2 at *Algona Kossuth* (MCK), and 18 May near *Otterville Bridge WMA Buchanan* (SSP).

**Blue-gray Gnatcatcher:** First: 16 Apr at *Pierce Cr Page* (KDY), and 18 Apr at both *Walnut Woods SP Polk* (JG) and *Skunk River WA Keokuk* (CRE).

**MOUNTAIN BLUEBIRD:** A female observed 3 and 4 Apr near *Camp Mitigwa*



*Blue-gray Gnatcatcher at Walnut Woods SP, Polk, 24 April 2009. Photograph by Jay Gilliam, Norwalk, IA.*

Boone (\*Jorgen Johansen) was Iowa's first since 2004.

#### **Townsend's Solitaire:**

One photographed at Pioneer P Mitchell 11 May was the third latest on record (RIA-photo, PHA). One wonders if the bird spent the winter undetected in Iowa or southern Minnesota, or did it migrate the wrong direction this spring?

**Veery:** More than twenty individual migrants were reported, beginning with one 30 Apr at Hartman Reserve Black Hawk (TSS-photo) [ties record early]. The next appeared on the more normal date of 6 May at Walnut Woods SP Polk (JG). Late migrants still sang 28 May at Call SP Kossuth and 31 May at Smith WA Kossuth (both

MCK). Possible late May nesters were noted at White Pine Hollow Dubuque, Jakway Forest Buchanan, Backbone SP Delaware (3), and Brush Creek Canyon Fayette (KVS, CRE, BSc).

**Gray-cheeked Thrush:** First: 3 May Decatur (NJM, ZMi) and 4 May at Smith WA Kossuth (MCK). More than twenty migrants were seen, with the high count of 2 reported on four occasions, the last on 28 May at Hitchcock NA Pottawattamie (MOr). Nocturnal flight calls of this species were reported as one per minute over Ames Story during the early morning hours of 6 and 13 May (SSP).

**Swainson's Thrush:** Reported from six counties before 1 May, the first on 26 Apr Decatur (NJM-details). In contrast with the last two springs, no large fallouts were noted, with the peak of 8 occurring 17 May at Grammer Grove WA Marshall (MP). Huge numbers



*Townsend's Solitaire, Pioneer Park, Mitchell, 11 May 2009. Photograph by Reid Allen, West Des Moines, IA.*

of calls were detected from birds passing in the night, however, with 10 per minute counted at Ames *Story* over 1 ½ hours 13 May (SSP).

**Hermit Thrush:** The first showed up in the north: 8 Mar at Carolyn Fischer's yard *Cerro Gordo*. A big fallout was witnessed 8 Apr *Boone*, with 140 filling a valley behind Larry Dau's house. Elsewhere, 9 on 21 Apr at George Wyth SP *Black Hawk* (CRE) was the most. The last would have been 28 Apr at Call SP *Kossuth* (MCK) and 29 Apr at Keuhn *Dallas* (TL) if it wasn't for a very late individual 11 May at Beaver Bottom Wetlands *Dallas* (DTh-details).

**Wood Thrush:** First: 24 Apr at Urbandale *Polk* (BE) and 25 Apr at both Dean and Sharon Bluffs SP *Appanoose* (DT).

**Gray Catbird:** One heard and then seen 4 Apr at Polk City WA *Polk* (JG-details) was record early by two weeks. Normal arrival was shown by 2 on 24 Apr *Decatur* (NJM), 25 Apr at Coralville Res *Johnson* (DP), and 2 on 25 Apr at Croton Unit *Lee* (RLC).

**Northern Mockingbird:** First migrant: 29 Mar at Cone M *Louisa* (DP). Northern birds included: 27 Apr at the NIACC campus *Cerro Gordo* (PH), 3 May near Little Wall L *Hamilton* (CJF), and 7 May at Owego Wetlands *Woodbury* (POR).

**Brown Thrasher:** First: 26 Mar near Fairfield *Jefferson* (DCP), 27 Mar at McGowan RA *Davis* (CRE), and 28 Mar at West Des Moines *Polk* (POR).

**American Pipit:** First: 7 Mar *Decatur* (NJM) and 2 on 13 Mar at Clear L *Cerro*



*Wood Thrush, Lizard Creek Wildlife Area, Webster, 24 May 2009. Photograph by Mark Brown, Iowa City, IA.*

*Gordo* (PH). Most: 150 on 30 Mar *Hancock* (PH) and 57 on 2 Apr at Riverton WA *Fremont* (KDy). Last: 10 May *Decatur* (NJM) and 17 May at Dan Green Sl *Clay* (LAS).

**SPRAGUE'S PIPIT:** One alighted on the farthest SW road *Fremont* 16 May just long enough to be documented by Karen Viste-Sparkman before heading on its way.

**Cedar Waxwing:** Most: 600 on 4 Apr at Waubonsie SP *Fremont* (KDy) and 100 on 31 May at Algona *Kossuth* (MCK).

**Blue-winged Warbler:** First: 28 Apr at Lacey-Keosauqua SP *Van Buren* (CRE). One was out of range 14 May at Henderson Woods *Dickinson* (LAS). A few were found in the west: 4 on 29 and 30 May at Sylvan Runkle St Pres *Monona* (TLu) and 3 on 23 May at Spalding P *Woodbury* (POR). The most reported was 7 on 22 May at Stephens SF *Lucas* (AMJ).

**Golden-winged Warbler:** First:

# IOU 2009 Photography Contest Winners

IOU is pleased to present the 2009 photography contest winners. There were some excellent entries that challenged judges Stephen J. Dinsmore, Jim Moreland, and John Wenck.



*First Place Winner: Blackburnian Warbler, George Wythe State Park, Black Hawk, 21 May 2008. Photograph by J. Scott Garrett, Cedar Falls, IA.*



*Second Place Winner: Lark Sparrow, photographer's yard, Boone, 29 June 2008. Photograph by Larry Dau, Boone, IA.*



*Third Place: Common  
Redpoll, Lake Macbride,  
Johnson, 2 February 2009.  
Photograph by Richard  
Lynch, Solon, IA.*

*Honorable Mention: Male  
White-winged Crossbill,  
Hampton Cemetery, Franklin,  
1 March 2009. Photograph by  
Larry Dau, Boone, IA.*



*Honorable Mention: Female  
White-winged Crossbill,  
Squaw Creek State Park,  
Linn, 5 February 2009.  
Photograph by J. Scott Gar-  
rett, Cedar Falls, IA.*

Hickory Hill P *Johnson* 6 May (ICBC), then 8 May at Pine L SP *Hardin* (MP), Squaw Creek P *Linn* (DP), and Coffman Woods *Keokuk* (CRE). From 1–5 were reported daily until 17 May as far west as *Sac* (13 May PE). A late single showed up at Cottonwood RA *Polk* 24 May (RLC).

**Tennessee Warbler:** First: 20 Apr *Decatur* (BBa-details, NJM-details) [ties record early], then not until 4 May at Waterworks P *Polk* (JB). Most: 25 on 14 May at Starr's Cave *Des Moines* (CRE), 24 on 17 May *Davis* (RLC), and a very loud 136 on 17 May *Decatur* (NJM). Last: 28 May at Marion *Linn* (JDu), 28 May near Pilot Knob SP *Winnebago* (SSP), and 29 May at Algona *Kossuth* (MCK). None were reported from the west; Paul Roisen had to travel to *Lee* to see his FOY 17 May.

**Orange-crowned Warbler:** First: 23 Apr *Decatur* (NJM) and 24 Apr at Chichaqua WA *Polk* (SSP). Most: 6 on 27 Apr at Waterworks P *Polk* (JB) and 28 on 10 May *Decatur* (NJM). Last: 17 May at Saylorville Res *Polk* (SJD) and 18 May at Hottes L *Dickinson* (MHB).

**Nashville Warbler:** First: 28 Apr at both *Decatur* (NJM) and Lacey-Keosauqua SP *Van Buren* (CRE). Most: 55 on 8 May *Decatur* (NJM) and 15 on 14 May at Starr's Cave *Des Moines* (CRE). All reports were from the eastern half of the state. Last: 30 May at Parker's Woods *Cerro Gordo* (RGo).

**Northern Parula:** The first were noted 19 Apr *Decatur* (BBa, ZMi) and 22 Apr at Walnut Woods SP *Polk* (JG), and 10 could be found at Lacey Keosauqua SP *Van Buren* by 25 Apr (RLC). Migrants

were noted in the west *Cherokee*, *Sac*, *Page*, *Monona*, and *Woodbury* (POR, PE, KDy, TLu).

**Yellow Warbler:** First: 4 on 26 Apr at Cone M *Louisa* (CRE), 27 Apr at Pleasant Creek RA *Linn* (BSc), and 2 on 27 Apr *Decatur* (ZMi).

**Chestnut-sided Warbler:** First: 6 May at Hickory Hill P *Johnson* (ICBC) and 8 May at Belva-Deer RA *Keokuk* (CRE). Most, all 17 May: 5 at Grammer Grove WA *Marshall* (MP), 11 at Saylorville Res *Polk* (SJD), 27 in *Decatur* (NJM), and 8 at Jefferson County P (CRE). Singles 13 May *Sac* and *Fremont* were the only western reports (PE, KDy). Last: Singles were still at Smith WA *Kossuth* and Mason City *Cerro Gordo* 31 May (MCK, PH).

**Magnolia Warbler:** First: 5 May at Hickory Hill P *Johnson* (ICBC). Most: 14 on 17 May *Decatur* (NJM) and 12 on 17 May *Davis* (RLC). Last: 2 on 28 May at Call SP *Kossuth* (MCK) and 31 May at *Polk City*



*Cedar Waxwing*, near the YMCA Camp, Boone, 4 March 2009. Photograph by Jim Moreland, Boone, IA.





*Magnolia Warbler, male, Sunken Lake, Dickinson, 18 May 2009. Photograph by Mark Brown, Iowa City, IA.*

WA *Polk* (RLC). All reports were from the eastern half of the state.

**Cape May Warbler:** First: 6 May at Hickory Hill P *Johnson* (ICBC), 8 May at Belva-Deer RA *Keokuk* (CRE), and 8 May all the way out to Hawarden *Sioux* (POR). Another was noted 10 May in the west in *Sac* (Stan Buman). From 1 to 4 were found in eleven additional counties, that high count at Urbandale *Polk* 17 May (BE). Last: 19 May *Cerro Gordo* (RGo), 19 May at Fairfield *Jefferson* (SJD), and 22 May at George Wyth SP *Black Hawk* (TSS).

**Black-throated Blue Warbler:** All: a male 6 May at Union Grove SP *Tama* (MP), a male 11 and 12 May at Algona *Kossuth* (Sharon Arndorfer fide MCK), a female 13 May at Indianola *Warren* (JS), and a male 16 May at Ames *Story* (SJD).

**Yellow-rumped Warbler:** It's unclear whether several scattered Mar birds qualify as migrants or winterers shifting around, but after 4 Apr at Plum Creek WA *Bremer* (SSP) and 3 on 5 Apr at L Ahquabi SP *Warren*

(JS), they began to pop up all over. Numbers built to 40–60 in late Apr at various locations, and peaked at 139 on 1 May at Walnut Woods SP *Polk* (JG). An Audubon's Warbler with a "bright yellow throat" was noted at Urbandale *Polk* 3 May (BE). Last: 20 May at Union Grove SP *Tama* (MP) and 21 May in Shane Patterson's yard Ames *Story*.

**Black-throated Green Warbler:** Few reported. First: 26 Apr *Decatur* (NJM) and 30 Apr at Diamond L *Poweshiek* (MP). Singles were noted at Black Hawk L *Sac* 1 May (JG, JB) and 13 May (PE). The high counts were both on 9 May: 4

at Grammer Grove WA *Marshall* (MP) and 3 at Hawkeye WA *Johnson* (CJC). Last: 17 May at L Wapello SP *Davis* (RLC) and 20 May at Grammer Grove WA (MP).

**Blackburnian Warbler:** First: 6 May at Cedar Rapids *Linn* (DP), followed by Waterworks P *Polk* (JB), 2 at Belva-Deer RA *Keokuk* (CRE), and Hickory Hill P *Johnson* (ICBC), all 8 May. 1–3 were reported from twelve additional counties, as far west as *Sac* and *Fremont*, both 13 May (PE, KDy). Last: 28 May at Call SP *Kossuth* (MCK) and 29 May in Chris Edwards' yard *Johnson*.

**Yellow-throated Warbler:** First: 14 Apr at Lacey-Keosauqua SP *Van Buren* (CF) and 15 Apr at Ledges SP *Boone* (PS). They were noted in *Polk* and six additional counties to the south and east in their regular range. Two on 13 May at Black Hawk L *Sac* (PE) were well outside that usual range.

**Pine Warbler:** All: 6 May at Grammer Grove WA *Marshall* (MP), 14 May at Matsell Bridge WA *Linn* (BSc, PH), and a territorial singer 18 May at Donnellson

Unit *Lee* (JWR), where they've nested in the past.

**Palm Warbler:** First: 23 Apr at Chichaqua WA *Polk* (SSP), 5 on 24 Apr at Ada Hayden P *Story* (WO), and 25 Apr Rapp P *Page* (KDy). Most: 10 on 3 May at Weise Sl *Muscatine* (CRE), 9 on 4 May at Smith WA *Kossuth* (MCK), 7 on 9 May at Hawkeye WA *Johnson* (CJC), and 8 on 10 May at Eagle L *Kossuth* (SSP). Last, both 17 May: at Polk City WA *Polk* (JG) and 2 at Union Grove SP *Tama* (MP).

**Bay-breasted Warbler:** From one to three were reported from *Johnson*, *Linn*, *Polk*, *Jones*, *Ringgold*, *Jefferson*, *Lee*, *Story*, and *Black Hawk*. The first was 13 May near Iowa City (JLF), and the last was 22 May at Waterloo (TSS).

**Blackpoll Warbler:** First: 5 May at Squaw Creek P *Linn* (BSc) and 3 on 8 May at Belva-Deer RA *Keokuk* (CRE) Most: 13 on 8 May *Decatur* (NJM) and 12 the farthest west 17 May at Gull Pt SP *Dickinson* (MHB). Last: 27 May at Mason City *Cerro Gordo* (PH) and 2 on 28 May at Call SP *Kossuth* (MCK).

**Cerulean Warbler:** First: 4 May at Saylorville Res *Polk* (SJD) and 6 May at Grammer Grove WA *Marshall* (MP). One was considered rare 13 May at Brookside P *Story* (SSP), and another was more so at Bacon Creek P *Woodbury* 21 and 22 May (GLV, POR, TLu). The highest concentration was heard 29 May at Mines of Spain *Dubuque*, where 11 were found (CRE). Late arriving males were searching for

mates 31 May at Pilot Knob SP *Hancock* and Smith WA *Kossuth* (CJF, MCK).

**Black-and-white Warbler:** First: 14 Apr at Pierce Cr *Page* (KDy), then not until 2 on 24 Apr at Ada Hayden P *Story* (WO). Most: 6 on 26 and 27 Apr *Decatur* (NJM, ZMi) and 5 on 13 May at Grammer Grove WA *Marshall* (MP). Last: 22 May at Parker's Woods *Cerro Gordo* (RGo) and 25 May at Lizard Creek WA *Webster* (MHB).

**American Redstart:** First: 3 May at Brenton Sl *Dallas* (JB) and 5 May at Iowa City *Johnson* (CRE). Most: 35 on 30 May at L Macbride *Johnson* (CRE), but there wasn't the widely reported movement of late May migrants of the past two years.

**Prothonotary Warbler:** One at an oxbow of the Des Moines R in Des Moines *Polk* was second earliest on 23 Apr (AMJ). Another was very early at Robison Wildlife Acres *Story* 25 Apr (Teresa Testroet). They were reported SE of an *Allamakee* (FL) to



*Palm Warbler*, South Sycamore Bottoms, Johnson, 9 May 2009. Photograph by Mark Brown, Iowa City, IA.



*Prothonotary Warbler, Jim Fuller's home, Iowa City, Johnson, 13 May 2009. Photograph by James Scheib, Iowa City, IA.*

Story (LGD, SJD) to Fremont (KDy) line, except for Algona Kossuth (MCK).

**Worm-eating Warbler:** All: 2 on 25 Apr at Croton Unit Lee (RLC), 3 and 18 May Decatur (NJM), 7 May at Lacey-Keosauqua SP Van Buren (JLF), 10 May at Elk Rock SP Marion (JG, SJD), and 22 May at Cardinal M Winneshiek (EB).

**Ovenbird:** First: 23 Apr Decatur (BBa) and 24 May at Parker's Woods Cerro Gordo (RGo). Most: 21 on 7 May at Woodland Mounds Warren (SJD).

**Northern Waterthrush:** First: 23 Apr Decatur (NJM, ZMi) and 25 Apr at Grammer Grove WA Marshall (MP). A relatively common warbler in the west this year, with observations in multiple locations Woodbury, Plymouth, and Sioux (POR). The most noted at one location were 6 on 14 May at Grammer Grove WA

(MP). Last: 27 May at Backbone SP Delaware (CRE, BSc) and 31 May all the way down in Decatur (NJM).

**Louisiana Waterthrush:** Up to four were reported from eleven counties in their usual range, beginning 4 Apr at River Valley Wetland Cedar (CRE). Outside the regular areas, sightings 22 Apr and 2 May at Decorah Winneshiek (DC) were unusual, and a pair nested in Spalding P Sioux City Woodbury (POR).

**Kentucky Warbler:** First: 25 Apr at Donnellson Unit Lee (RLC) and 26 Apr Decatur (NJM). Also noted in usual range Des Moines, Van Buren, Davis, Johnson, Dubuque, and Fremont. One out of range 8 May Woodbury (JP) wasn't again reported. Observations 19 and 27 May at Smith WA Kossuth likely involved the same bird (MCK).

**Connecticut Warbler:** Very similar



*Northern Waterthrush, South Sycamore Bottoms, Johnson, 9 May 2009. Photograph by Mark Brown, Iowa City, IA.*

to 2007, there were 19 birds reported from sixteen locations in fourteen counties. First: 13 May at Squaw Creek SP *Linn* (JF), followed by Starr's Cave *Des Moines* (JWR), Wood Thrush Woods Preserve *Jefferson* (CRE), and Jefferson County P (CRE), all 17 May. One was at Bacon Creek P *Woodbury* 22 May (GLV). Last: 29 May at Algona *Kossuth* (MCK), 31 May at Pilot Knob SP *Hancock* (CJF), and 2 on 31 May at Smith WA *Kossuth* (MCK).

**Mourning Warbler:**

First: 12 May at River Valley Wetland *Cedar* (CRE, BSC), and 13 May at Brookside P *Story* (SSP), Hickory Hill P

*Johnson* (ICBC), and 2 in the west at Manti *Fremont* (KDY). Last: 2 on 28 May at Lime Creek Conservation Area *Cerro Gordo* (PH), 28 May near Pilot Knob SP *Winnebago* (SSP), and 4 on 31 May at Smith WA *Kossuth* (MCK).

**Common Yellowthroat:** First: 24 Apr *Decatur* (NJM) and 2 on 25 Apr at Croton Unit *Lee* (RLC). Peak count: 32 on 17 May at Plum Creek WA *Bremer* dropped to about half that many two weeks later (SSP).

**Hooded Warbler:** All: 25 Apr at Donnellson Unit *Lee* (RLC, and through the period m.ob.), 28 Apr in Diana Pesek's yard *Linn*, 5 May at Brookside P *Story* (HZ), 2 singing on 9 May at Sugar Bottom RA *Johnson* (CRE), 12 and 26 May at Cedar Valley P *Cedar* (JLF, CRE), a female 13 May at Manti *Fremont* (KDY), 18 May at Hickory Hill P *Johnson* (ICBC), 19–29 May at Pammel Woods *Story* (NAO, WO, SJD), and 31 May at Pilot Knob SP *Hancock* (CJF).



*Wilson's Warbler, Sunken Lake, Dickinson, 18 May 2009.*  
*Photograph by Mark Brown, Iowa City, IA.*

**Wilson's Warbler:** First: 1 May *Decatur* (NJM), 7 May at Hickory Hill P *Johnson* (ICBC), and 8 May at Belva-Deer RA *Keokuk* (CRE). Most: 5 in the west at Porter's L *Page* 14 May (KDY) and 6 on 17 May at Plum Creek WA *Bremer* (SSP). The last were all at Mason City *Cerro Gordo*: at Parker's Woods and 2 at Lime Creek Conservation Area 28 May (RGo, PH), and Paul Hertzels yard 31 May.

**Canada Warbler:** First, all 14 May: at Squaw Creek P *Linn* (DP), at Hickory Hill P *Johnson* (ICBC), and at Starr's Cave *Des Moines* (CRE). Ten more singles were reported from the eastern half of the state, then groups of 3 on 27 May at Smith WA *Kossuth* (MCK), 4 on 28 May at Parker's Woods *Cerro Gordo* (RGo), and finally the last single 29 May at Princeton WA *Scott* (WMZ).

**Yellow-breasted Chat:** All: 5 May at Squaw Creek P *Linn* (BSC), 7 and 18 May at

Croton Unit *Lee* (JLF, DP), 2 on 23 May at Hawkeye WA *Johnson* (CJC), 23 and 29 May at Mines of Spain *Dubuque* (KVS, CRE), 26 May at Red Cedar WA *Muscatine* (CRE), 2 on 31 May *Polk* (DK), and 31 May *Decatur* (NJM).

**Summer Tanager:** First: 15 Apr at Whiterock Conservancy *Guthrie* (\*Scott Schmidt) [second earliest], 25 Apr at Croton Unit *Lee* (RLC), 26 Apr *Taylor* (KDN), and 26 Apr at both Brown's Woods SP *Polk* (DTh) and Neal Smith Trail *Polk* (KVS). They were also noted in *Fremont* (KDY), nine other counties south and east from *Boone* (Karl Jungbluth), and wandering northward 14 May at Henderson Woods *Dickinson* (LAS), 16 May at Sioux Center *Sioux* (JVD), 18 May at Nora Springs *Floyd* (RGo), and 20 May at Silver L *Worth* (RGo).

**Scarlet Tanager:** First: 2 May *Lucas* (JS), 4 May *Decatur* (ZMi), and 4 May at Bacon Creek P *Woodbury* (POR). Most: 7

on 24 May at Hanging Rock Woods *Johnson* (CJC).

**WESTERN TANAGER:** Two 1st-year males were photographed at feeders this spring: 9 and 10 May at Cherokee *Cherokee* (\*DB, \*POR), and 15–17 May at a home along the shell Rock R *Cerro Gordo* (\*RGo, \*CJF).

**Spotted Towhee:** All: 2 until 29 Mar at Waubonsie SP *Fremont* (KDY), 22 Mar *Decatur* (NJM, ZMi), 24 Apr at Tieville Bend *Monona* (SJD), 25 and 26 Apr near Osceola *Clarke* (Steve Harvey), 2 May at Artesian L *Carroll* (MP, SJD, JG), 8 May *Woodbury* (JP), and 21 May at Smith WA *Kossuth* (PH, MCK) [second latest].

**Eastern Towhee:** First: 15 Mar *Decatur* (ZMi), where 4 were found 17 Mar (BBa), and 2 on 24 Mar *Lee* (JWR). Most: 12 on 25 Apr at Croton Unit *Lee* (RLC).

**American Tree Sparrow:** Last: 12 Apr at Red Feather Pr *Polk* (KVS), 4 on 12 Apr near Otterville Bridge WMA *Buchanan* (SSP), 14 Apr *Decatur* (ZMi), and 2 on 22 Apr at Ada Hayden P *Story* (WO).

**Chipping Sparrow:** First: 24 Mar near Lacey-Keosauqua SP *Van Buren* (JWR), 2 Apr *Decatur* (NJM), and 4 Apr at Walnut Woods P *Polk* (JG). Ben Baldwin counted 175 in two flocks 23 Apr *Decatur*.

**Clay-colored Sparrow:** First: 5 on 22 Apr at Sandhill L *Woodbury* (POR) and 24 Apr at Tieville Bend *Monona* (SJD). High migrant counts of 6–8 were found in *Jefferson*, *Polk*, *Dickinson*, *Decatur*, and *Story* until 10 May (CRE, JB, MCK, NJM,



*Scarlet Tanager, male, Sunken Lake, Dickinson, 19 May 2009. Photograph by Mark Brown, Iowa City, IA.*



*Western Tanager, Cherokee, 10 May 2009. Photograph by Paul Roisen, Sioux City, IA.*

WO), with smaller numbers lingering for another week. Likely nesters included 4 on 26 May near Myre Sl *Winnebago* and 7 on 28 May in Danville Township *Worth* (both SSP).

**Field Sparrow:** First: 17 Mar *Decatur* (ZMi, NJM), 22 Mar at Ada Hayden P *Story* (WO), 22 Mar *Clarke* (AB), and 24 Mar at Lacey-Keosauqua SP *Van Buren* (JWR).

**Vesper Sparrow:** First: 20 Mar *Decatur* (NJM) and 24 Mar near Lacey-Keosauqua SP *Van Buren* (JWR).

**Lark Sparrow:** First: 19 Apr at Brenton Arboretum *Dallas* (JB), 22 Apr at Bronson *Woodbury* (TLu), and 2 on 23 Apr *Wapello* (CRE). Most: 25 on 8 May *Woodbury* (JP) and 39 on 10 May *Decatur* (NJM). One near Otterville Bridge WMA *Buchanan* 18 May (SSP) was about as far to the northeast as the species is found in Iowa.

#### **Savannah Sparrow:**

First: 7 Mar *Decatur* (NJM, ZMi) and 8 Mar at Spencer *Clay* (LAS). Most: 185 on 13 Apr *Decatur* (BBa).

#### **Grasshopper Sparrow:**

First: 10 Apr *Decatur* (NJM) [ties third earliest], then 28 Apr *Davis* (CRE), 28 Apr *Jasper* (KVS), and 29 Apr *Kossuth* (MCK). Most: 25 on 3 May near Barringer Sl *Clay* (SSP) and 39 on 31 May *Decatur* (NJM).

#### **Henslow's Sparrow:**

First: 13 Apr *Decatur* (BBa, NJM), 8 on 18 Apr at Sedan Bottoms *Appanoose* (TJ), and 19 Apr near Pilot Knob *Winnebago* (SSP). Most reports came from twelve counties south and east from *Boone*, but in May, Shane Patterson found them

in *Clay*, *Worth*, *Winnebago*, *Emmet*, and *Palo Alto*.

**Le Conte's Sparrow:** First: 18 Apr at Hawkeye WA *Johnson* (JLF) and 5 on 18 Apr at Sedan Bottoms *Appanoose* (TJ). 1–4 were later found *Guthrie*, *Story*, *Woodbury*, *Greene*, *Decatur*, and *Kossuth* (JG, SSP, POR, AMJ, NJM, MCK), with the last at Owego Wetlands *Woodbury* 11 May (POR).

**Fox Sparrow:** First: 7 Mar at Ada Hayden P *Story* (WO), 16 Mar at Diamond L *Poweshiek* (MP), and 18 Mar Near Fairfield *Jefferson* (DCP). Most: 107 on 29 Mar *Decatur* (NJM), 32 on 2 Apr at Call SP *Kossuth* (MCK), and 40 on 9 Apr at Brenton Arboretum *Dallas* (JB). Last: 15 Apr at Grammer Grove WA *Marshall* (MP) and 4 on 29 Apr at Kheun *Dallas* (TL).

**Song Sparrow:** The first numbers of

migrants reported were 32 on 17 Mar at Blue Flag M Warren (JG).

**Lincoln's Sparrow:** First: 25 Apr at Grimes Polk (JB), 27 Apr near Fairfield Jefferson (DCP), and 6 on 28 Apr at Sioux City Woodbury (POR). Last: 2 on 21 May in Jack Creek Township Emmet (SSP), and 24 May at both Troy Mills WA Buchanan (CRE) and Lizard Creek WA Webster (MHB).

**Swamp Sparrow:** The first incoming migrants noted were 4 on 14 Mar at Cone M Louisa (JWR).

**White-throated Sparrow:** No one reported more than single birds in Mar, while Nathan Miller counted 235 on 26 Apr during the peak of migration Decatur. Last: 4 at Grammer Grove WA Marshall (MP) and 2 at Ochee Yahola Worth (PH), both 17 May.

**Harris's Sparrow:** Movement was noted by 6 on 16 Mar Ringgold (JWR) and 9 on 22 Mar Decatur (NJM). Most: 56 were counted Decatur 11 Apr (BBa) and 25 were in Woodbury 8 May (JP). They were noted

east to 23 Apr at Williams Pr Johnson (DP), 6 May at L Meyer Winneshiek (Larry Reis fide DC), and 7 May at Burr Oak Winneshiek (Lee Zieke fide DC). Last: 3 on 16 May at Ada Hayden P Story (WO) and 24 May at Dan Green Sl Clay (MCK).

**White-crowned Sparrow:** The influx of migrants was noted by 27 on 21 Apr at Riverton WA Fremont (KDy), 30 on 8 May Clarke (SJD), and 27 on 8 May Decatur (NJM). Last: 17 May at Ames Story (SSP), 3 on 17 May at Liscomb Marshall (MP), 24 May at Dan Green Sl Clay (MCK), and 25 May at Hawkeye WA Johnson (CJC).

**Dark-eyed Junco:** Most: 250 on 9 Apr at Squaw Creek P Linn, including one "Oregon" type (BSc). Last: 2 on 7 May at Saylorville Res Polk (JG) and 9 May near Fairfield Jefferson (DCP).

**Lapland Longspur:** Peak movement was noted by 1,500 on 20 Mar Hamilton (SJD), 4,000 on 20 Mar Grundy (MP), 1,000 on 29 Mar Des Moines (CRE), and 3,000 on 6 Apr Jasper (KVS). Last: 8 on 18 Apr at Neal Smith NWR Jasper (DTh), 4 on 22 Apr Kossuth (MCK), and a late male straggler 21 May at Luton WMA Woodbury (TLu-details) [record late].

**Smith's Longspur:**

First: 29 on 22 Mar Clarke (AB) and 38 on 29 Mar Decatur (NJM). Up to 42 were noted Polk, Webster, Des Moines, Pocahontas, Winnebago, and Clay. Birds were discovered 7 Apr at a burned area of Neal Smith NWR Jasper (KVS), and up to 150 gave nice views for many birders there until the last 75 on 19 Apr (JB). Finally, groups of 4, 11,



Clay-colored Sparrow, Tieville Bend, Monona, 24 April 2009. Photograph by Stephen J. Dinsmore, Ames, IA.



Male Lapland Longspur, Moeckley Prairie, Polk, 5 April 2009. Photograph by Stephen J. Dinsmore, Ames, IA.

20, and 60 were found 22 Apr at different locations Kossuth (MCK).

**Snow Bunting:** The only report was of 3 on 10 Mar Winneshiek (Larry Reis fide DC).

**Rose-breasted Grosbeak:** First, all 25 Apr: Chris Edwards' and Rick Hollis' yards Johnson, Osceola Clarke (Beth Brown), and Decatur (NJM).

**BLACK-HEADED GROSBEAK:** Five males were diverted into Iowa this spring; how many females went undetected? All: 13 and 14 May at a Story City Story feeder (\*Sue Yeakel), 14 May Woodbury (\*POR), 17 May at Larry Dau's feeders Boone (\*LGD), 17 and 18 May at a Sioux City Woodbury feeder (\*Kim Mounts), and 19 May at Sioux Center Sioux (\*JVD). The three birds photographed at feeders were 1st-year males.

**Blue Grosbeak:** The first arrivals were 5 noted 21 May at two locations Woodbury (TLu). They were also seen Monona, Pottawattamie, and Fremont in the west (POR, LJP, BKP, MOR), and 5 had returned

to Carroll Carroll 25 May (RTh).

#### **LAZULI BUNTING:**

A male visited a Des Moines Polk feeder 5–7 May (\*Michael Cigelman, \*RIA/PHA, \*SJD, \*CRE, \*AMJ, \*Gerald White) [record early].

#### **Indigo Bunting:** First:

24 Apr at a Mason City Cerro Gordo feeder (CJF), 25 Apr at Leon Decatur (Matt Torres), and 26 Apr near Fairfield Jefferson (DCP). Most: 38 on 17 May Decatur (NJM) and 20 on 25 May at Hawkeye WA Johnson (CJC).

#### **Dickcissel:** First: 26

Apr at Rapp P Page (KDy) and 3 May Decatur (NJM). Most: 57 on 31 May Decatur (NJM).

**Bobolink:** First: 2 on 25 Apr Decatur (NJM), 2 on 27 Apr Linn (BSc), and 28 Apr at both Kellerton Grasslands Ringgold (Matt Torres) and Davis (CRE). Shane Patterson detected multiple flocks of Bobolinks passing over Ames Story during the early morning hours of 13 May, with more than 6 calls per minute heard.

**Red-winged Blackbird:** 11,000 were counted 13 Mar leaving an overnight roost Polk (JG).



Black-headed Grosbeak, Dau's yard, Boone, 17 May 2009. Photograph by Larry Dau, Boone, IA.



**Eastern Meadowlark:** They were singing in the south by 1 Mar *Decatur* (ZMi) [ties third earliest] and 6 Mar *Louisa* (DP). In the NW, the first were noted 11 Apr near Barringer Sl *Clay* (SSP), 13 Apr at Broken Kettle Grasslands *Plymouth* (TLu), and 17 Apr at Owego Wetlands *Woodbury* (POR). A nest was found 27 May near *Prairie Gold WA*, a first for *Palo Alto* (SSP).

**Western Meadowlark:** Twenty-three heralded the start of the spring season with song 1 Mar *Union* (JG).

**Yellow-headed Blackbird:** Earliest was in the south 1 Apr at Riverton *WA Fremont*, and then 2 in the north 12 Apr at Thorpe *WA Winnebago* (JB). Seventy were counted 2 May at Eagle L *Kossuth* (SSP) as they filled NC Iowa wetlands, while 16 at Harrier M *Boone* and 12 at Snake Creek M *Greene* (both 30 May LGD) settled the southern edge of the range.

**Rusty Blackbird:** The first migrant flock of this species of concern was 10 on 15 Mar at Cone M *Louisa* (CRE). Some sizable flocks were reported across the state: 300 on 21 Mar at Forney L *Fremont* (KDy), 91 on 4 Apr at Plum Creek *WA Bremer* (SSP), 125 on 4 Apr at Weise Sl *Muscatine* (CRE), 100 on 11 Apr at Hanlontown M *Worth* (JB), and 350 on 11 Apr at Mallard M *Cerro Gordo* (JB), but few were noted elsewhere. Last: 2 on 22 Apr at Colo Ponds *Story* (SSP), 20 on 23 Apr at Decorah *Winneshiek* (Larry Reis fide DC), and 28 Apr *Boone* (SJD) [ties second latest].

**Brewer's Blackbird:** First: a single 7 Mar *Lee* (JWR), then 100 on 21 Mar at Forney L *Fremont* (POR). 1–22 were reported from

nine additional counties. Last: 3 on 10 Apr at Panicum Pr *Worth* (SSP), 5 on 10 Apr at Rush L *Palo Alto* (LAS), and 6 on 22 Apr near Colo Ponds *Story* (SSP).

**Common Grackle:** Bob Cecil estimated 100,000 passing over his Des Moines *Polk* home the morning of 8 Apr.

**Great-tailed Grackle:** First: 16 Apr at Forney L *Fremont* (KDy), 26 on 18 Apr *Pottawattamie* (KDy), and 22 Apr at Hanlontown M *Worth* (RGo). From 1 to 17 were noted at locations ending in Marsh, Slough, or Lake in *Boone*, *Greene*, *Kossuth*, *Jones*, *Polk*, *Tama*, and *Johnson*. Nest building was observed 27 Apr *Decatur* (NJM).

**Brown-headed Cowbird:** Seventy-five were already in *Adams* 14 Mar (JG).

**Orchard Oriole:** First: 27 Apr at Coralville *Johnson* (Jill Beckman). Most: 9



*Rusty Blackbird, Mallard Marsh, Cerro Gordo, 10 April 2009. Photograph by John Bissell, Grimes, IA.*

on 16 May at Waubonsie WA *Fremont* (KVS) and 16 on 18 May *Decatur* (NJM).

**Baltimore Oriole:** First: 23 Apr *Decatur* (NJM), and 25 Apr at both *Osceola Clarke* (Beth Brown) and *Coralville Johnson* (Jill Beckman).

**Purple Finch:** All: 21 on 1 Mar *Clarke* (JG), a high of 12 during Mar *Decatur* (NJM), 8 on 15 Mar at *Jester P Polk* (JB), 27 Mar at *Pine L SP Hardin* (MP), 3 on 5 Apr *Boone* (LGD), 3 on 26 Apr at *Walnut Woods SP Polk* (JG), 30 Apr *Madison* (DTh), and 2 on 1 May at *Spirit L Dickinson* (ETh).

**White-winged Crossbill:** All: 5 on 1 Mar *Cass* (JG), 2 on 1 Mar *Marshalltown Marshall* (MP), 3 on 4 Mar at *Grammer Grove WA Marshall* (MP), 9 on 12 Mar at *Yellow River SF Allamakee* (DK), 6 on 14 Mar at *Grammer Grove* (MP), 6 on 15 Mar at *Marshalltown* (MP), and 3 on 29 Mar at *Kheun Dallas* (TL).

**Common Redpoll:** All: one 13 and 15 Mar at *George Wyth SP Black Hawk* (CRE, JG), 10 through mid-Mar at *Ames*

*Story* (DE), 16 Mar at *Burr Oak Winneshiek* (Lee Zieke fide DC), 18 Mar at *Spirit Lake Dickinson* (ETh), 19 Mar at *Spencer Clay* (LAS), 22 Mar at *Mason City Cerro Gordo* (CJF), 3 on 28 Mar at *Webster City Hamilton* (SJD), and a late surprise 11 Apr at *Liscomb Marshall* (MP).

**Pine Siskin:** An unprecedented explosion of *Pine Siskin* nesting made them this spring's most reported species. Evidence of nesting was noted in *Cerro Gordo, Polk, Kossuth, Webster, Warren, Story, Hardin, Crawford, Palo Alto, and Jefferson*. They were also reported during May from *Scott, Woodbury, Decatur, Cherokee, Clarke, Linn, Clay, and Dickinson*. Peak numbers ranged in time and space from 24 on 1 Mar at *Fairmount Cemetery Scott* (WMZ) to 17 on 10 May at *Cherokee Cherokee* (DB), although most reports were of singles or a few pairs or family groups.

**Eurasian Tree Sparrow:** Noted in *Linn, Louisa, Washington, Johnson, and Lee* (BSc, DP, CRE, CJC, POR).

## COMMENT

As happens every year, some interesting observations were omitted from this report due to a lack of supporting details. Rare species, cryptic species, relatively common species at the early or late edge of their migration window, and even an occasional accidental species (*Brown Pelican* this spring), have all been susceptible at some point. Including some description of the bird strengthens the record and helps field reports editors keep the literature as accurate as possible for future reference.

Birders constantly push the visual edge of field identification, with better optics and new fieldmarks being tested. In recent years, a new edge of birding has emerged with birders interested in identifying even more birds with their hearing. Using information from websites such as *Old Bird* (oldbird.org) and William R. Evans' and Michael O'Brien's CD, *Flight Calls of Migratory Birds*, birders are entering night-flying migrants identified by flight calls into the data pool of field reports. There have always been heard-only detections included in field reports. We're confident in an *American Bittern* heard chugging in a marsh or a *Connecticut Warbler* singing out of a thicket because of knowledge gained from experience and recordings, and this knowledge base gives us confidence in the reports of others. Traditional bird sound recordings used for identification are decades old, confirming call and song ID's that we and those who birded before us have heard on a regular basis, passed on from LP and cassette tape to CD and MP3 to hand-held computing

device. Identifying nighttime flight calls is new, something most of us have little experience with and few references for, and as a result, possibly a little lack of comfort with. There just isn't a widespread knowledge base to use as a frame of reference when considering these reports. Bill Evans' own caution is appropriate: "do your best to identify the calls, he encourages, but keep the word 'presumed' in the back of your mind, as there remains so much we don't know about the calls of many species" (Kroodsmas 2009). Personally, I'm intrigued by this new frontier of birding, but I'm struggling to devise the best way to incorporate the contributed data into field reports. I opted this year to report a rate of call detections, which allows for ease of comparison with other counts, and doesn't assume a unique individual bird as the source for each call. Comments on this subject, or any aspect of the field reports, are always welcomed.

Finally, I want to recognize the contributions of John Van Dyk to the pages of the field reports. John has been a regular correspondent from Sioux Center for 30 years, enabling us to record some of the notable birds of the northwest corner of Iowa (Vermilion Flycatcher, Mountain Bluebird, and Black-headed Grosbeak, just to name a few of the rarest). John's Iowa birding career has come to an end as he moves to Washington state. Few IOU members (including this editor) ever met John, but he was knowledgeable about the birds of his area, observant, and his reports came reliably as the seasons. Thanks for your efforts, John.

And, regardless of whether or not your information was singled out for inclusion in these pages, thanks to all who shared their birding experiences this spring.

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# Report of the Records Committee for 2008

*Ann M. Johnson*

The string of three new species to the state checklist each year was broken in 2008, but Scott's Oriole (#420) was added while there was still snow on the ground. A total of 54 reports were reviewed during the year. A number of other documentations were reviewed by the seasonal field reports editors for supporting evidence of reported observations. The committee thanks everyone for timely submission of reports so that our publications offer the most current information available on Iowa avian populations.

Committee members for 2008 with years in which their terms expire were Aaron Brees (2008), Matt Kenne (2009), Paul Hertzell (2010), Stephen J. Dinsmore (2011), Rita Goranson (2012), Ross Silcock (2013), and Ann Johnson (secretary, appointed by the committee). Chris Edwards was nominated by the committee and subsequently appointed by the board of directors to fill a regular term beginning in 2009.

The following status changes were approved by the committee at its annual meeting on 19 October 2008: Tricolored Heron, accidental to casual; Black Vulture, accidental to casual; Gyrfalcon, accidental to casual; and White-winged Dove, casual to regular. Although the status of Ferruginous Hawk and Black-headed Gull remains regular by the number of reports over the past ten years, this status continues based on regular and specific locations. Reports of the gull seen away from the Spirit Lake area and all Ferruginous Hawk records should still include documentation or detailed notes to be considered for inclusion in the published literature.

The committee continues to struggle with reports containing sketchy descriptions. Nothing is more important for maintaining a record of Iowa's rare bird life than a complete description of the bird in question. The committee's charge is *not* to validate an individual's sighting but to agree that the tangible evidence will withstand scrutiny years from now. To this end, the group agreed at the annual meeting to present a workshop at the spring IOU meeting on writing acceptable documentations.

The Records Committee is also embarking on another project to make research information readily available on our website. This project will initially include citations for rare birds sighted in Iowa and the data used to determine status at our annual meeting.

Each record reviewed by the Records Committee is assigned a six-digit number (year and sequence number), which is included in this report for future reference. Records are classified as follows: A = Accepted (-S = specimen, -P = photograph, -R = recording, -D = documentation) and NA = Not Accepted. To be accepted, a record must receive 7 votes on the initial review or 6 votes on a subsequent review. The subcategories A-S, A-P, and A-R indicate that physical evidence supports the identification, and records are subclassified based on a majority vote. References to *IBL* are the page of the field reports or a special note in *Iowa Bird Life* where the record is cited. Published notes and previous citations may contain more details. An \* indicates a previously uncited documentation.

In the past, a separate photo file was maintained by the Records Committee. With the

proliferation of digital images being submitted, as well as documentations having unique identification numbers, these photos are now being archived as a part of the documentation and are not assigned a separate number. The classification in the entries below will indicate the presence of an identifiable photo with the record.

A number of significant records that would add to our knowledge of Iowa birds are unfortunately missed each year. Good photos should at least have some minimal details entered to identify who, what, when, and where. Written documentations are more difficult and, as a lower level of evidence, require more detail and logic to be accepted for use by future researchers. The committee relies on the observer to paint a picture with words of what was seen and how it was identified. This is seldom available from listserv posts or brief details submitted with seasonal field reports. A few documented details on size and structure, along with a description of what was seen and consideration of any similar species, can make all the difference between an accepted and not accepted report. The committee can only evaluate the evidence that is submitted.

#### 2008 RECORDS ACCEPTED

**Black-bellied Whistling-Duck:** 10 Jun at Beaman in *Grundy* (2008-20, **A-D**, IBL 78:170).

**Brant:** 20–27 Nov at Mason City in *Cerro Gordo* (2008-42, **A-P**, IBL 79:6–7, 26, Hertzell 2009).

**Eurasian Wigeon:** 14 April at Swan Lake in *Johnson* (2008-15, **A-D**, IBL 78:117, J. Fuller 2008).

**Barrow's Goldeneye:** 16–22 Nov s. of Luton in *Woodbury* (2008-47, **A-P**, IBL 79:8, Lutter 2009) and 30 Nov at Red Rock Res in *Marion* (2008-40, **A-P**, IBL 79:8, Dinsmore 2009a).

**Yellow-billed Loon:** 15–19 July between Traer and Gladbrook in *Tama* (2008-26, **A-P**, IBL 78:171, Dinsmore and Dinsmore 2008).

**Neotropic Cormorant:** 3–6 May near Riverton in *Fremont* (2008-06, **A-P**, IBL 78:119, Dinsmore 2008).

**Tricolored Heron:** 11 July at Forney Lake in *Fremont* (2008-25, **A-D**, IBL 78:172, Dyche 2008b).

**Glossy Ibis:** 18 May at Riverton in *Fremont* (2008-16, **A-P**, IBL 78:120, Dyche 2008a); 20–21 May in *Iowa* (2008-36, **A-P**, Hovick 2009); 29 Jun near Chelsea in

*Tama* (2008-22, **A-P**, IBL 78:173, Dinsmore and Gilliam 2008); and 9–30 July at Forney Lake in *Fremont* (2008-24, **A-P**, IBL 78:173,185, Dyche 2008a).

**Black Vulture:** 12 Jul at Port Louisa NWR in *Louisa* (2008-21, **A-D**, IBL 78:173, C. Fuller 2008).

**Snowy Plover:** 3 September at Hawkeye WA in *Johnson* (2008-28, **A-D**, IBL 79:12, Scheible 2009).

**Whimbrel:** 20 May at Riverton in *Fremont* (2008-09, **A-P**, IBL 78:123) and 7 June at Broken Kettle Grasslands in *Plymouth* (2008-48, **A-D**, \*Paul Roisen).

**Red Phalarope:** 26 Sep at Saylorville Res in *Polk* (2008-39, **A-D**, IBL 79:14) and 25 Oct at Red Rock Res in *Marion* (2008-32, **A-D**, IBL 79:14).

**Laughing Gull:** 11–19 Jul at Saylorville Res in *Polk* (2008-23, **A-P**, IBL 78:175); 14 Aug at Huron Bottoms in *Des Moines* (2008-49, **A-D**, IBL 79:14); and 18 Oct at Red Rock Dam in *Marion* (2008-44, **A-P**, IBL 79:14).

**California Gull:** 2 Aug at Saylorville Res in *Polk* (2008-43, **A-P**, IBL 79:14, Dinsmore 2009c) and 23 Oct at Lake Manawa in *Pottawattamie* (2008-45, **A-P**, IBL 79:14).

**Iceland Gull:** 12 Jan at Keokuk in *Lee* (2008-01, **A-D**, *IBL* 78:70).

**Black-legged Kittiwake:** 30 Oct–5 Nov at Saylorville Res in *Polk* (2008-33, **A-P**, *IBL* 79:14, 24); 30 Oct to 5 Nov at Saylorville Dam in *Polk* (2008-46, **A-P**, *IBL* 79:14, 79[1] cover); and 8–9 Nov at Red Rock Dam in *Marion* (2008-34, **A-P**, *IBL* 79:14, 25).

**White-winged Dove:** 26–27 April near St. Anthony in *Marshall* (2008-12, **A-P**, *IBL* 78:125); 1–9 May at Oskaloosa in *Ma-haska* (2008-04, **A-D**, *IBL* 78:125); 6–7 May at Waterloo in *Black Hawk* (2008-07, **A-P**, *IBL* 78:125); 25–30 May at Glidden in *Carroll* (2008-10, **A-P**, *IBL* 78:125); 26 May at Ames in *Story* (2008-17, **A-P**, *IBL* 78:125); 4–6 June at Adel in *Dallas* (2008-11, **A-P**, *IBL* 78:176, 78:140); and 6 Jun in *Decatur* (2008-19, **A-D**, *IBL* 78:176).

**Sprague's Pipit:** 28 October at Davis City in *Decatur* (2008-51, **A-D**, *IBL* 79:18).

**Prairie Warbler:** 2–4 May at Nine Eagles SP in *Decatur* (2008-05, **A-D**, *IBL* 78:131) and 6 Sep at Brushy Creek in *Webster* (2008-41, **A-P**, *IBL* 79:19, 31, Dinsmore 2009b).

**Prothonotary Warbler:** 8 October at Easter Lake in *Polk* (2008-30, **A-D**, *IBL* 79:19).

**Lazuli Bunting:** 14–15 May at Carroll in *Carroll* (2008-14, **A-P**, *IBL* 78:135) and 26–28 May at Sioux Center in *Sioux* (2008-18, **A-D**, *IBL* 78:135).

**Painted Bunting:** 12 May–1 June at Ames in *Story* (2008-08, **A-P**, *IBL* 78:135, 179).

**Bullock's Oriole:** 8–15 Sep s. of Nevada in *Story* (2008-38, **A-P**, *IBL* 79:22, 79(1) back cover, Check 2009).

**Scott's Oriole:** 7–14 Apr at Estherville in *Emmet* (2008-03, **A-P**, *IBL* 78:135, 78(3) back cover, Balch and Johnson 2008).

## 2008 RECORDS NOT ACCEPTED

**White Ibis:** Three dark ibis with white rumps and upper wing coverts, seen by multiple observers, mystified the committee. Although the upperparts are right for a first alternate White Ibis, the dark underparts are not consistent with any known plumage (2008-27).

**Glossy Ibis:** In the opinion of some members, the description of a group of three birds did not unequivocally rule out White-faced Ibis (2008-13).

**King Rail:** A lack of description and no corroboration from other observers made it difficult to evaluate this report (2008-37).

**Laughing Gull:** On a split vote, the committee felt that a few critical details were missing to be absolutely certain of the ID (2008-50).

**Little Gull:** Although this bird was likely a Little Gull, the description of a distant bird did not rule out Ross's Gull (2008-35).

**Mew Gull:** A distant bird in less than optimal light was incompletely described to be certain it was this species (2008-52).

**Iceland Gull:** After considerable discussion and on a split vote, the committee concluded that this bird was somewhere between a Kumlein's Iceland and Thayer's but could not be safely labeled as either (2008-02).

**Burrowing Owl:** A second-hand report with minimal details was deemed too sketchy for acceptance (2008-53).

**Cave Swallow:** Some inconsistency in the description, combined with an unusual date for vagrancy and the difficulty in comparing Cave to young Cliff Swallows, led to a conservative vote (2008-29).

**Sprague's Pipit:** A lack of some critical descriptive details of a difficult species,

especially those that would help eliminate similar species, left members with reasonable doubt (2008-31).

**Evening Grosbeak:** Key features of this species reported on a CBC were not noted (2008-54).

#### LITERATURE CITED

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- Dinsmore, S. J. 2008. Neotropical Cormorant in Fremont County. *Iowa Bird Life* 78:157–158.
- Dinsmore, S. J. 2009a. Barrow's Goldeneye at Red Rock Reservoir. *Iowa Bird Life* 79:54–55.
- Dinsmore, S. J. 2009b. Prairie Warbler at Brushy Creek Recreation Area. *Iowa Bird Life* 79:56–57.
- Dinsmore, S. J. 2009c. Two Summer Records of California Gulls in Iowa. *Iowa Bird Life* 79:122.
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- Dyche, K. 2008a. Glossy Ibis at Forney Lake. *Iowa Bird Life* 78:194–195.
- Dyche, K. 2008b. Tricolored Heron at Forney Lake. *Iowa Bird Life* 78:193–194.
- Fuller, C. 2008. Black Vulture in Louisa County. *Iowa Bird Life* 78:196–197.
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- Hertzel, P. 2009. Brant in Mason City. *Iowa Bird Life* 79:50–51.
- Hovick, T. 2009. Glossy Ibis in Iowa County. *Iowa Bird Life* 79:51–52.
- Lutter, T. 2009. Barrow's Goldeneye in Woodbury County. *Iowa Bird Life* 79:55–56.
- Scheible, W. 2009. Snowy Plover: Second Fall Record for Iowa. *Iowa Bird Life* 79:53–54.

I thank Paul Hertzel for checking all of the inclusive dates against field reports data so that this report is an accurate representation of rare bird sightings in Iowa.

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## First Record of Violet-green Swallow in Iowa

*Dan L. Reinking and Kenneth L. Hollinga*

After parking the car at the corner of 13th and D streets in Hawarden, Sioux County, Iowa at 8:50 A.M. on 14 May 2009 to check a large gravel pit for birds, we noted the presence of dozens of swallows and Chimney Swifts (*Chaetura pelagica*) foraging over an open area used for brush composting. We quickly noted the presence of Barn Swallows (*Hirundo*



*rustica*), Northern Rough-winged Swallows (*Stelgidopteryx serripennis*), Bank Swallows (*Riparia riparia*), Cliff Swallows (*Petrochelidon pyrrhonata*), and Tree Swallows (*Tachycineta bicolor*). We also noted one swallow with an unusual amount of white, which KLH remarked upon and we both agreed warranted further study. The swallows and swifts frequently dipped below an embankment at the far end of the open area. We skirted the site and positioned ourselves on a high dirt pile overlooking a small, garbage-strewn pond over which the swallows and swifts were very actively foraging. Skies were overcast, it was breezy, and morning temperatures were cool, at or below about 10 degrees C. We speculated that the swallows were using this sheltered pond during a morning of what must have been difficult foraging conditions for aerial insectivores.

The swallows and swifts were very concentrated flying in a small area, and we could look down on them for the most part, although they occasionally came up to or above our eye level. Despite all of the activity, we were quickly able to locate the bird in question and confirm its identity as a male Violet-green Swallow (*Tachycineta thalassina*). What initially drew our attention to the bird were large white patches extending up the rear flanks, and nearly meeting above the rump. With our vantage point immediately above the pond, these patches were quite obvious on the bird flying below us about 30 m away and made this individual easy to distinguish from all of the other birds that were present. Closer inspection showed a large white "cheek" area behind and above each eye, a brilliant green back, and a violet-purple rump. These white patches as well as the entire breast and belly were bright, stark white. The underparts of Northern Rough-winged and Bank Swallows that were also present were dingy white by comparison. Tree Swallows also foraging in the group had bright white underparts similar to the Violet-green Swallow, but lacked the white face and flank patches, and had more or less uniformly bluish upperparts, lacking the distinct green back and distinct purple rump of the Violet-green Swallow. The Tree Swallows also appeared slightly larger in direct comparison.

Both authors were born and raised in Sioux County, but have lived in and birded extensively in the western United States and are very familiar with Violet-green Swallows. We observed the bird for about 30 minutes, and DLR attempted to photograph it. Because of the speed at which the bird was flying, its erratic course over the pond, and the number of other swallows and swifts that were present (several dozen in total), it was very difficult to get the bird into the viewfinder with a telephoto lens. One photograph was obtained that, while rather poor, does show the green back and violet rump, and shows quite well the white flank patches that nearly meet above the rump, with only a thin, dark line separating the patches on the upper side of the bird.

Violet-green Swallow occurs regularly in states bordering Iowa to the west. It is described as an uncommon breeder in western Nebraska, a regular spring and fall migrant in western Nebraska, and a rare casual migrant in central Nebraska, with a peak migration period of 5–19 May (Sharpe et al. 2001). It is a common migrant and summer resident in western South Dakota (Tallman et al. 2002). As of March 2009, it is listed as having hypothetical status in Missouri, suggesting one or more possibly valid records that did not meet criteria for full acceptance (<<http://www.mobirds.org/MBRC/MOChecklist.asp>>). Interestingly, on the same date as our observation, Black-headed Grosbeaks (*Pheucticus melanocephalus*) were reported on the Iowa birding listserv in Woodbury and Story counties,

Iowa, while both Black-headed Grosbeak and Violet-green Swallow were also reported in Johnson County, northeastern Kansas on the Kansas birding listserv. These reports may be indicative of a more widespread eastward pulse of typically western migrants on the day of our observation. Violet-green Swallow is listed as accidental in Minnesota (<<http://moumn.org/lists.html>>) and in Illinois (<[http://www.illinoisbirds.org/birds\\_of\\_illinois1.html](http://www.illinoisbirds.org/birds_of_illinois1.html)>) by their respective state ornithological societies, but is not included on Wisconsin's bird list (<<http://www.wsobirds.org/wilist2008.pdf>>).

The Iowa Records Committee has reviewed and accepted our documentation, thus adding Violet-green Swallow to the state's official bird list. We considered ourselves very fortunate to have found a new species for Iowa's bird list. We also thought it remarkable to have seen six species of swallows at one time at a single location, with Purple Martins seen later bringing our total for the day to seven species.

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- Tallman, D. A., D. L. Swanson, and J. S. Palmer. 2002. *Birds of South Dakota* 3<sup>rd</sup> ed. South Dakota Ornithologists' Union. 441 pp.

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## **Fork-tailed Flycatcher in Tama County, Again!**

*Mary Ann Gregory and Stephen J. Dinsmore*

"What kind of bird has a tail about a foot long?" asked the caller. It was 25 April 2009, 12:30 P.M. Mary Ann Gregory and her husband, Ken, raced to the golf course north of Dysart where they met the caller, Sheldon Barber, course superintendent for the Dysart Golf Club. He remembered having seen a photo and reading an article about a rare bird in the *Dysart Reporter*, the local newspaper, more than a year ago. He wondered if this might be the same kind of bird.



Figure 1. Fork-tailed Flycatcher, Tama, 26 April 2009. Photograph by Stephen J. Dinsmore, Ames, IA.

Just then a Fork-tailed Flycatcher lit in front of them on the third fairway, where Barber had last seen it. Indeed, it was the same species Mary Ann had found and written about for their local newspaper in 2007. The identification was simple because of the distinctive black cap, dark gray upperparts, and contrasting white underparts, long black tail streamer, size, and fly-catching behavior. The length of the tail streamer hints that the bird was most likely an adult male. Feeding close to the ground, the bird did not seem to be bothered by observers. It rested overhead in a burr oak, and then swooped to the grass again. It continued to feed in the same manner even during rainfall.

The bird was quite ragged with well-worn primaries and only one long black tail streamer, indicating it was in heavy molt (Figure 1). Based on the appearance of deep emargination on the outer primaries, the bird appeared to be of the nominate subspecies *T. s. savana*, although subspecies cannot be conclusively assigned due to molt.

Amazingly, the first sighting in Iowa was only thirteen road miles or 9.43 miles “as the crow flies” from this appearance. Mary Ann spotted the first Fork-tailed Flycatcher in Iowa on 21 November 2007 in Tama County (Gregory and Johnson 2008).

The Dysart Golf Club is private, but was most gracious in allowing many birders to look for and observe the rare bird. By noon on 27 April 2009, the Fork-tailed Flycatcher

had disappeared. Interestingly, a different Fork-tailed Flycatcher appeared in Missouri at almost the same time and was a first for that state.

#### LITERATURE CITED

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## Sprague's Pipit in Fremont County

*Karen Viste-Sparkman*

On 16 May 2009, Stuart Sparkman and I were visiting Breeding Bird Atlas blocks in Fremont County. Much of it was unfamiliar territory for us, but we drove all accessible roads and walked around in public areas as much as possible. One of the blocks we visited was block 706 in the far southwestern corner of the state. Naturally we found ourselves driving slowly down 322 Street, a gravel road leading to Lower Hamburg Bend. This road is on the Iowa–Missouri border. A newly planted field was on our north and another agricultural field to our south, with grass and herbaceous vegetation on both shoulders of the road. We had seen Savannah Sparrows in the vicinity, and were expecting to see a Vesper Sparrow when a small, streaked bird flew in front of our car and we caught a flash of white on the outer tail feathers. It landed directly in front of the car on the left side of the road, which was actually in Missouri. We got good looks at it through the windshield with our binoculars. We both quickly realized when we saw its thin bill that it was not a sparrow.

The bird was tan/light brown, streaked, with a plain face and blank expression, long neck relative to size, long, thin bill, and round head. The bird was fully visible for less than a minute before walking into the grass. We got glimpses of its head and upper body as it walked through the shorter grass. Then it disappeared into the vegetation for several minutes. We decided to get out of our car to look for it and it flushed from next to the car and flew north into Iowa, calling as it went. The flight call was two syllables, ascending (*squee-eet*). The flight pattern was undulating upward as the bird continued to ascend until out of sight.

This is the seventh Sprague's Pipit record for Iowa. In western Missouri, Sprague's Pipit is considered an uncommon transient, and is not a review species.

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## Snowy Plover in Woodbury County

*Paul O. Roisen*

The school day was over and I had just enough time to run by some of my favorite birding spots before I went home. There wasn't much at "The Square," now officially known as Luton North WMA; the same result for Luton South. I decided to go by the "Dairy Ponds" on the way to Owego. As I approached the west I saw nothing on the pond at all, which was a surprise. I proceeded east covering the pond with my binocular, I was getting ready to move on, and up popped a plover. Having found a Piping Plover here last year, I told myself that it was my first Piping Plover for the year. I looked more closely and realized something wasn't quite right. It seemed to be moving more rapidly than most Piping Plovers I had seen and it seemed to be a bit smaller. The legs didn't look right—they were gray, not orange. The body was brown on white; there was a black slash trailing from the eye down the nape, and the broken neck ring barely extended past the side of the neck. The bill was all black.

My mind said Snowy Plover but my brain said take more notes. I checked the field guide and after 10 more minutes of viewing, debating, and taking some photos I called some of the local talent (see front cover photo). They arrived rather quickly, though it seemed to me to be an eternity; confirmation was soon made. What a wonderful little bird to visit Woodbury County. The little guy stayed there for four days and was for the most part the only shorebird on the pond. One more Iowa Snowy Plover sighting at Saylorville in Polk County by John Bissell followed this one.

A "lifer" and a new Iowa bird to boot.

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# Snowy Plover at Saylorville Reservoir

*John Bissell*

On the morning of 25 April, 2009, I decided to check the beaches at Saylorville Reservoir for shorebirds. It was rainy and overcast that morning, so there were very few people at the lake, which made the potential for finding shorebirds along the beaches that much better. I made my way down to the Cherry Glen area and started slowly driving along the shoreline. Once I got to the area where the pavement changed over to gravel, I noticed a small, pale plover

actively foraging with two Semipalmated Plovers. My initial impression was that it was a Piping Plover based on the sand-colored back of the bird. I was able to approach by vehicle fairly close, and realized that this bird had dark legs and a relatively longer and stout bill. I ruled out Piping Plover based on these features. I suspected I was looking at a Snowy Plover, but I had never seen that species before, so I contacted Aaron Brees, Jay Gilliam, and Stephen J. Dinsmore and I described what I was looking at. They all agreed that I was looking at a Snowy Plover.

Unfortunately, I did not have my camera with me, but Aaron and Jay were able to come while I was watching to make sure the bird did not leave, and both got some nice photos to confirm my sighting. Later in the day, I took my camera and went back and was able to get some photos as well (Figure 1). Interestingly, Paul Roisen had found another Snowy Plover in Woodbury County the day before, so there was definitely a movement of this species into the state.

The Saylorville Snowy Plover was seen by many birders, and was last reported on 27 April. It seems as though this species may soon become rare but regular in Iowa.



*Figure 1. Snowy Plover, Saylorville Reservoir, Polk, 25 April 2009. Photograph by John Bissell, Grimes, IA.*

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# Mountain Bluebird in Boone County

*Jørgen Johansen*

In the afternoon on 3 April 2009, I was walking our three German shepherds on an acreage just east of Camp Mitigwa in Boone County when I noticed an unusual looking bluebird sitting in a locust tree. The presence of the dogs did not seem to bother it and it let me walk right up to within 20 feet to take its picture. It was almost all grey, with a blue tail, and some blue patches on the wing, but without any hints of reddish colors (Figure 1). The next day I saw it again through the window of our house sitting atop a septic system vent before it flew away. I am a novice so I did not know what it was but I was fairly certain it was some kind of bluebird. Since my bird book did not prove particularly helpful in this instance I decided to Google “bluebird” and look through the images that came up to get a clue. Sifting through many pages I finally came across a picture of a female Mountain Bluebird and it was clear that was what I had encountered.



*Figure 1. Mountain Bluebird, near Camp Mitigwa, Boone, 3 April 2009. Photograph by Jørgen Johansen, Boone, IA.*

This represents the 18th documented sighting in Iowa of a Mountain Bluebird and the first in five years. I am fairly certain I saw a female mountain bluebird on our property last year around April as well. However, at the time I could not figure out what it was only having my memory to rely on, which is why I now always have my camera with me when I walk the dogs. In any case I plan to keep my eyes open for Mountain Bluebirds again next spring.

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## **Book Review: Recently Published Field Guides**

*W. Ross Silcock*

North American birders now have several choices of field guides, a far cry from the days of Chapman, then Peterson and Pough. The Golden Guide arrived, a few others followed, such as Stokes and the National Audubon three-volume guide, but now we have at least five quality North American guides to choose from. The current popular choice is one of the Sibley versions. If you're like me, a field guide junkie, you'll have them all—they are not expensive. I was able to buy the latest three for a total of \$52 including shipping. The three I bought, and the subject of this review, are produced by the National Wildlife Federation (NWF), edited by Edward S. Brinkley; the Smithsonian (SM), edited by *Birding* editor Ted Floyd; and the 5th edition of the National Geographic's effort (NG), edited by Jon Dunn and Jonathan Alderfer. All are enlighteningly entitled *Field Guide to the Birds of North America*.

I must say first that I am partial to the NG guide, mainly because it has been out for several years, with several opportunities for positive updates. It is easy to use, with plenty of white space, newly-added thumb-tabs for quick searching of the guide, maps on the same page as the text, and excellent paintings. Species accounts are well-written and informative, with mention of most plumages likely to be encountered. NG also shows most of the subspecies and labels the paintings with the Latin names. NWF is OK too, but not as consistent with illustrations of subspecies as NG; perhaps it's hard to find good photos of all of the subspecies. SM only mentions subspecies in passing, but does show some of them, albeit hard to decipher as the labels are superimposed on the photos. The new 5th edition NG includes more than 80 accidental species; however, these are in a separate sec-



tion at the rear. I'd prefer they were in taxonomic order within the main body of the guide; finding rarities is largely a function of an observer's ability to discern differences between the expected species and its rarer counterpart(s). Of course, one has to be aware that a rarer counterpart exists.

The other two guides are photographic, a trend started by Kaufmann in his excellent photographic field guide. The quality of photos available these days is amazing; most plumages can now be shown with clear photos. Harking back to the Peterson system of arrows pointing to key field marks, the NWF guide has text on the photos performing the same function; I find this useful. However, some plumages are depicted in rather small photos, which do not allow enough detail in many cases. Text is oriented toward ecological notes, often interesting and helpful when trying to get a feel for a species' "life-style." Finding certain species is easier with such information at hand. Maps are located with the photos and text. The NWF guide also has a fairly extensive and useful glossary.

Also photographic, the SM guide has, in my opinion, better quality photos than the NWF guide; most are larger as well. Identification details accompany each photo, but are in rather small type and somewhat difficult to read quickly. The details provided are well done, however, and this guide has more information packed into it than the other two discussed here. A key feature of the SM guide, one that virtually requires its ownership, is a listing with each species of molt strategy. Understanding this aspect of field identification is increasing rapidly these days and is critical to most difficult identification problems. For the more hard-core listers, the SM guide includes ABA Finding Difficulty codes, which can be helpful in determining whether a species "should be there."

What do I recommend, you ask? My take is that, because these guides are relatively inexpensive and each has its good points, it makes sense to own them all. They do fit into a vehicle quite readily (even mine), although obviously all of them together make a heavier load than necessary for the field. The arguments made about how heavy or how big field guides are, and their suitability for field use because of that, never really impressed me; identification skills are much more rapidly advanced by taking notes or even photos in the field and perusing the literature later. Fumbling with a field guide (any of them) in the presence of the bird often means a lost opportunity for a good find.

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# **Fifty Years Ago in *Iowa Bird Life***

*James J. Dinsmore*

The September 1959 issue of *Iowa Bird Life* commemorates the 30th anniversary of the founding of the Cedar Rapids Bird Club. A color photograph of a male Prothonotary Warbler by Tom and Fred Kent provides an excellent frontispiece for the issue, which features eight articles about the club and its members.

Leading off, Robert Vane discusses a number of birding areas frequently visited by club members. These include several nearby areas including Cedar Lake, Swan Lake, Lily Lake, and Lake Macbride State Park, and others that are further away. Several areas in Cedar Rapids that had already been lost to development are also mentioned.

Two short articles discuss some of the pioneers of the club and the annual banquet. Mrs. Robert Vane provides a good overview of some of the club's activities including field trips, IOU meetings hosted, and special programs. Longtime club member Lillian Serbousek discusses the club bird list. From 1935 through 1958, a total of 272 species had been seen by club members. The earliest calendar date for each of these species is listed in the article.

W. F. Kubichek, a former Coe College professor and one of the club's founders, contributed an article on the winter habitat of the Whooping Crane in Texas based on his longtime work with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. Alfred Meyer discusses the work of George Berry, a longtime Cedar Rapids naturalist. The issue ends with the song of the Cedar Rapids Bird Club. Written by C. Esther Copp, this lengthy effort includes both some history of the club and mention of many of its members.

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**ANNUAL MEMBERSHIP DUES** (renewable yearly): Fledgling (students) \$15, Institutional \$30, Foreign \$35, Goldfinch \$30, Bluebird \$35, Oriole \$50, Egret \$75, Osprey \$100, Bald Eagle \$250, and Peregrine Falcon \$500+. Membership dues entitle members to receive *Iowa Bird Life* and *IOU News* quarterly and to vote and hold office in the Union. Contributions are tax deductible to the extent allowed by law. Join, give a gift, or manage your membership on-line at <[www.iowabirds.org](http://www.iowabirds.org)>. Paper forms for new members and renewals may be mailed to the treasurer (see inside front cover). Back issues of *Iowa Bird Life* are available from Membership Coordinator Pam Allen, 7955 Wistful Vista Dr., #20, West Des Moines, IA 50266 (2birders@hickorytech.net).

**INSTRUCTIONS TO AUTHORS:** Original manuscripts, notes, letters (indicate if for publication), editorials, and other material relating to birds in Iowa should be sent by e-mail attachment in Microsoft Word to editor. Research manuscripts should include abstract, introduction, study area, methods, results, discussion, and literature cited sections and will be sent for peer review. Accepted manuscripts will be published promptly depending on space available.

Photos and graphics: Submit only original, unsized, and unenhanced photos in your camera's JPEG (\*.jpg) format. Photos must be 300 dpi at the size they will be printed (6-1/2" wide by 6-1/2" high for the cover and various smaller sizes inside), so setting your camera to its highest possible resolution is recommended. The editor will do any resizing and enhancing required because any previous adjustments to the photos may make them unusable. Submit photos and graphics as e-mail attachments.

E-mail all material other than seasonal reports to editor at Kay@KayNiyo.com. Deadlines for submission are **January 1 for winter issue** (Vol. xx[1]), **April 1 for spring issue** [2], **July 1 for summer issue** [3], **October 1 for fall issue** [4]. Send seasonal field reports to field reports editors by deadlines listed on inside front cover.

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**CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNT:** Deadline for receipt of reports is 15 January. For forms and instructions, contact Christopher J. Caster, 4 South Ridge Ct., Coralville, IA 52241 (cjcaster@earthlink.net).

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**UPCOMING MEETINGS OF THE IOWA ORNITHOLOGISTS' UNION:** Fall 2009: 16–18 October 2009, Centerville

**FRONT COVER PHOTO:** Snowy Plover, Dairy Pond, Woodbury, 24 April 2009. Photograph by Paul Roisen, Sioux City, IA.

**BACK COVER PHOTO:** American Bittern with frog dinner, south of Harrier Marsh, Boone, 29 April 2009. Photograph by Jim Moreland, Boone, IA.

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